

VOICE OF FREEDOM



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Voice of Freedom

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION FOR THE
GROWTH OF ALL PHASES OF HUMAN LIFE



APRIL
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Vol. VII.

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No. 1

THE POWER OF THE HUMAN MIND.



PUTTING aside all ideas of church, all ideas of organizations of this kind and that kind, to what denomination in its widest sense do we, one and all without any exception, belong? To the human denomination. And the expression "human being" means one who has been given the power of thought. And when we speak of the power of a man we mean the power of his mind, the power of his intellect.

What is the meaning of the word "power"? Power means authority; power means influence. The power of the human mind means the authority of the human mind. Over what? Where are you now? Surrounded by so many environments, circumstances, and all kinds of objects of the world, good and evil, favorable and unfavorable. The power of the human mind therefore means the authority that you exercise on the objects, on the environments and circumstances surrounding you, the influence that you exercise on them.

The mathematical definition of the word "power" is—a continued multiplication of a quantity by itself a given number of times. Many of you who know mathematics know that "A" raised to the 7th power means "A" multiplied by itself seven times. Taking into consideration this mathematical definition what would be the definition of mind power? The continued multipli-

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cation of the human mind. By what? By itself. The continued multiplication of the human mind by the human mind a given number of times. What is the given number of times? The definite amount of time we have to live, and every act, every thought, every breath must be something added to the result produced by the continued multiplication of the mind by itself.

You may work out a mathematical sum any way you like; the answer may be wrong, or right, may be partly right or partly wrong, may be wholly right or wholly wrong. Some students may receive full marks, others half, still others according to whether they sleep in the class, work half-heartedly or diligently. At the time of death you will be tried, and the judgment will be based upon the result that was produced by the continued multiplication of the mind by itself a given number of times.

The meaning of the word "power" according to physical science is force. It may be horse-power, wind-power, water-power, steam-power, etc. All these powers are in that great being, Man.

What are the horses here, which carry you and pull you along? The horses are the body and the senses. Horse-power is nothing but running animal life, blindly running force. The senses are running everywhere, just like unbroken horses. Unless you break these horses, you cannot utilize their power to the best advantage. If you know how to control them, your wagon will be well pulled towards the goal.

And then comes the power of wind. In this organism, what is that? The breath. If you know how to regulate and control the breath, it will help you towards the accomplishment of your object.

Then comes the power of water. What is that in our organism? Water is the food that we eat. If you take care of your food, if you eat the proper kind and properly digest it, you will acquire a force that will help you in your work, in your life, in your mission.

Then comes at last the power of steam. What is our steam-power? It is the force that we get by higher culture. Whether you are selfish or unselfish, you have to take care of and understand the nature of your surroundings, and the relation that you bear to them and they to you. That is higher culture. By that you produce an effect which some people call moral, higher moral,—or say spiritual force.

Now all these forces, when applied to a machine, tend to create motion. What is our machine? The human organism. Do you know how wonderful that machine is? Have you ever seen or imagined a machine greater than this?

The motion must be directed, otherwise it creates a direction of its own. When the powers of the human mind are improperly directed, what happens? We become egoistic. We say:—"I can do this, I can do that; no one else is so great or can be so great as I. Even if I do not succeed in my business, or in my work, or in my life, still I am the greatest, I am the highest, I am the master, and all others are lower than I." But if we understand and if we can properly direct the powers, the same thing will have quite a different meaning.

Let the path of your life run to eternity so that the great wonderful powers you have within you may not kill you. What is the sign that these powers are working to tend to create a motion? Improvement, Advance-

ment, Progress, etc., which will be evidenced by a great will power. This will power has been created after the image of God. It is truly so. God is the creator, and you are going to be another creator, to show the father that you are his worthy son. God has created the world; you are also going to create another world. God has created good and evil, happiness and misery, birth and death, heaven and earth; you are going to create another set of things by which you will say there is neither happiness nor misery, neither birth nor death, neither heaven nor hell nor earth; eternal bliss, one thing. That is the production of man's intellect. That is the power of man.

Consciousness is knowledge; knowledge is intelligence. This Intelligence is all-pervading. It is divine, eternal and infinite. It is One, essentially speaking: externally speaking, at different times It manifests Itself differently. This difference is a matter of manner and measure, and not a question of kind or species. That very same One Consciousness has become by Itself at one place—dull and inanimate matter; chemistry tells us the story of even that dull matter's intelligence, by relating the wonderful laws of chemical affinity and of chemical proportion. At another place It manifests Itself as immovable and unintelligent life, as in plants. At some other place as movable, intelligent—but dumb—being, as in animals. And, somewhere It is expressed in Its full glory in every possible manner, as in man. All this difference is due to only the manner and the measure in which It exists or manifests Itself. In man this Consciousness finds Its fulfillment in the manner of Immortal and Infinite Ecstasy, the realization of which is the object and mission of man's life.—*Swami Trigunatita.*

EVOLUTION OF THE SOUL.

(Extract from a lecture given by Swami Abhedananda, at the Hindu Temple, Sunday evening, March 21, 1915.)

NATURE is always consistent in her principles, and her laws are uniform and universal. The same laws which govern the physical world are also governing the mental, moral and spiritual planes. If the external world has come into its present form through the gradual process of evolution, the same process is working within us in different departments of nature. By evolution, we mean growth, progress, expansion.

Growth, progress and expansion are the conditions of life on this plane. As on the physical plane the child begins to show signs of life by growth, progress and expansion, so on the mental plane. You will see that the child's mind at first is very simple, but gradually through the process of evolution its mind grows stronger. Its will power responds and there is the sign of a living mind.

Therefore growth, progress and expansion are the condition of mental development, mental evolution. So on the intellectual plane, the intellect of the child gradually grows from less powerful to greater. For instance, when I was a boy, my highest ideal was to be a cab driver. At that time I thought to be a cab driver was the highest ideal of life, but now I laugh at myself. How could I have thought such a thing?

In the same manner you will find that the conceptions of the world, of yourself, and of the conditions of life, which you have today will change. If they do not change, if you do not show signs of progress, growth

and expansion, then your mind and intellect have become stagnant. Therefore, we must be very careful in studying our own minds, in comparing the conceptions which we have today with those which we will have tomorrow. Similarly, the spiritual nature is subject to growth, progress and expansion. Each individual soul grows from the lower stages of consciousness to higher ones. At first the conception of life and of our being upon this plane appears to be very material, full of mistakes. Our intellect and our spiritual eyes are covered, as it were, with the veil of ignorance. We do not see things straight. But gradually, through the process of evolution, this thin veil of ignorance is rent, and we can see things better. The light of wisdom shines from within, and we can understand the purpose and ideal of evolution.

The purpose of evolution is to attain perfection. We see that in our physical form. The lower animal form had reached its perfection when the human body was manufactured by Nature. There is no other form on this plane and under the present conditions which may be considered as greater and higher than the human form. The nervous system and the brain of the human being are finer, and are the climax of the physical evolution of the body on this plane. Shall we not say, then, that this ideal, this purpose of evolution of the animal form has reached its perfection in the human body? We must say that, because we cannot conceive of anything higher than the human brain and the human body.

As on the physical plane you notice that the germ of life, before becoming a human form, passes through the different stages of evolution of the polyp, tadpole, fish,

reptile, dog, ape, and lastly, man, the human body: so on the mental, intellectual, moral and spiritual planes, the purpose of evolution is to attain perfection. Intellectual perfection comes when we realize the truth that Truth is eternal, and we do not make any mistake regarding the nature of Truth.

As the physical body gradually passes from childhood through youth to maturity, and the intellect of a human being passes through those three stages of intellectual childhood, intellectual youth, and intellectual maturity, so, in our spiritual evolution there are three principal stages, spiritual childhood, spiritual youth, and spiritual maturity.

Spiritual childhood begins with the conception of life after death. Before that conception comes, the mind lives on the material plane, having just ascended from the lower animal plane. The whole zone of consciousness is centered upon the gross physical body. We think then that this life is all in all, that after death nothing will remain and we will pass into oblivion. There is no moral nature and no life after death. Everything is finished with death. That is the conception of those who are living on the animal plane, who have not risen to the plane of spiritual childhood. Spiritual childhood begins with the conception of the soul or spirit that exists after the dissolution of the gross physical form. For instance, when a man finds any of his best friends or relatives dead, he cannot forget it. He thinks of his friend day and night, and meditates upon his good qualities, upon his work, upon his higher attainments in the material world. Gradually, he begins to believe that there is something like life after death, but he does not

know much about it. He has a belief that these departed spirits have power over nature, that they can control the forces of nature and produce phenomena which cannot be produced by ordinary human beings. Gradually he realizes that there must be a governor, a ruler over these hosts of departed spirits, and he makes a governor or ruler or monarch of the spirits—the tribal god. Ancestor worship is the beginning of all religions. In that lies the foundation of the great religions of the world, Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and all the isms. Modern Spiritualism is on the same plane of spiritual childhood. It helps us to understand the condition of life after death.

Gradually this stage of spiritual childhood is outgrown and the conception of the creator of the universe, the Lord of all gods and of all departed spirits is attained.

Monotheistic religions are dualistic. Their conception is that God is separate from nature and from the individual souls, of which the Lord is the creator.

Being human beings, we cannot think of any other form higher than the human form, and therefore, we give a human form to God. We magnify the attributes which we possess and make those attributes the attributes of the Almighty Being. This is the climax of the state of spiritual childhood. We think that we were created by an Almighty Being, that we have been sent here to this world, predestined to enjoy or to suffer, and we must obey His commandments. Otherwise, He will punish us. We are told that we must fear God. But you do not think for a moment that where there is fear, there is any love. There cannot be any love, because fear takes away all love. Where there is love, there cannot be fear.

You will find that the human mind cannot rest contented, cannot rest satisfied in that monotheistic or dualistic conception of God, for with this conception most of the questions which arise in our minds are never solved. For instance, we do not know whether we existed before, or not. What is the true nature of the soul? Where shall we go after death? Shall we go to heaven, or stay in the grave, or will the dust of our bones arise again? All these are mysteries, and these mysteries are never solved. You will have to have patch work. Stop questions. You do not know the mystery of the beyond. Everything will be explained after death. Among the dualists of different names and nations, you will find that they do not know. They cannot explain anything. They cannot understand the truth. They do not believe in the process of evolution, and naturally their minds are the minds of people groping in the darkness of ignorance.

But in India they developed in a different way. Whatever is illogical, unscientific and unphilosophical cannot be called religion in India, because the ideal truth is one, and science is trying to establish that truth. Logic helps us in understanding the nature of truth, philosophy describes it, and religion helps us to live up to that ideal. They are all different stages. They cannot be separated. India is the only country, and the Hindus the only people, who have developed a system which harmonizes with science, philosophy, logic and religion. Therefore, if you want to harmonize your conception of God with science, philosophy and logic, you will have to look towards the East to see how they did it, and in what way they found the key to the whole

solution of the problem of life and death. In that struggle they passed through different stages. They gave up the monotheistic conception and went deeper and deeper, and tried to find unity in variety, because they had the revelation which came to them that truth is one and cannot be many. God is one. The Absolute Being is one, and how to harmonize and unify all these different manifestations was the most important problem for them to solve. They developed six schools of philosophy, each of these schools reached a certain point, and other schools took it up from there and continued.

The whole system of Vedanta, or the whole religion of Vedanta was based upon the theory of evolution, not only of the physical nature, but the evolution of the mental, intellectual, moral and spiritual natures. And this evolution cannot stop until the goal is reached. As I have said, the goal is perfection. The spiritual evolution will reach perfection after moral perfection is reached. Morality is the gate of spirituality. No one can enter into heaven or the abode of spirituality, without crossing the threshold of morality. So ethics are most important. You must live an ethical life. An ethical mind is one which is struggling to overcome the animal nature by the higher nature. In other words, when the apparent man, which is animal, attached to the material conditions and the desires of the senses, struggles to reach a higher state of consciousness and to realize his true nature, the true self, which is the soul, which is immortal and a part of the Almighty Divine Being,—when that struggle comes, that is the first awakening and the beginning of the spiritual life. Then he tries to live a perfect moral life. And yet he is not sat-

ified. He still wants to grow higher. But after attaining to spiritual childhood, to the conception of the God who is the creator of the universe and separate from nature and the individual soul, if that individual soul does not show any sign of progress, does not grow, does not expand, then there he remains, and spiritual perfection does not come to such a soul. Stagnation comes. For that reason we say it is good to be born under the laws of the church, under the laws of a dualistic system, but it is not good to die under those conditions. Rise above that, because growth, progress and expansion are the conditions under which the soul can attain the goal of the spiritual evolution.

(To be continued)

I call, with St. Jerome, a perfect soul not that one that discovers only virtues in itself, that, like the Pharisee, is distinguished from the rest of men only by its penances and good works, but one that perfectly recognizes its nothingness and its imperfection; that feels the weight of its misery, of its passions, and of its evil habits; that considers itself as filled with vices and faults; that believes itself the most unfaithful, the most ungrateful, the basest of creatures; that, far from being satisfied with itself or dazzled by the splendor of its virtues, regards itself as an abyss of poverty, weakness, and malice; that distinguishes itself from others only by its humility, its obedience, its disinterested service, its confidence in God and its abandonment to His providence, and, above all, by a sincere, constant, firm desire to do God's will in all things, however they may thwart its natural inclinations. This is what I consider being holy and perfect; for humility is the foundation of perfection.—*St. Francis de Sales.*

SAYINGS OF ŚRĪ RĀMAKṚISHŪA

¶ Will you be able to practice as much as I tell you? If you live up to one-sixteenth part of what I say unto you, you will surely reach the goal.

¶ As in a pane of glass on which quicksilver has been laid, one can see his face reflected, so in the chaste heart of a totally continent devotee is reflected the image of the Almighty.

¶ Fire itself has no definite shape, but in glowing embers it assumes certain forms. The formless fire is then endowed with forms. Similarly the formless God sometimes invests Himself with definite forms.

¶ If I hold up this cloth before me, you will not see me any more, though I shall be as near you. So also God is nearer to you than anything else, yet because of the screen of egoism you cannot see Him.

¶ Those who seek for fame are under delusion. They forget that everything is ordained by the Great Disposer of all things,—the Supreme Being, and that all is due to the Lord and to no one else. It is the wise who say always, "It is Thou, It is Thou, O Lord," but the ignorant and the deluded say, "It is I, It is I."

¶ When an elephant is let loose, it goes about uprooting trees and shrubs, but as soon as the driver pricks him on the head with the goad, he becomes quiet; so the mind, when unrestrained, wantons in the luxuriance of idle thoughts, but becomes at once calm when struck with the goad of right discrimination (Viveka.)

THE STORY OF THE BOY GOPALA.

By the Late Swami Vivekananda

“**O**H mother! I am so afraid to go to school through the woods alone; other boys have servants or somebody to bring them to school or to take them home—why cannot I have someone to bring me home?”—thus said Gopal, a little Brahmin boy, to his mother one winter afternoon when he was getting ready for school. The school hours were in the morning and afternoon. It was dark when the school closed in the afternoon and the path lay through the woods.

Gopal's mother was a widow. His father who had lived as a Brahmin should, never caring for the goods of the world, studying and teaching, worshipping and helping others to worship, died when Gopala was a baby. And the poor widow retired entirely from the concerns of the world—even from that little she ever had,—her soul given entirely to God, and waiting patiently with prayers, fasting, and discipline, for the great deliverer death, to meet in another life him, who was the eternal companion of her joys and sorrows, her partner in the good and evil of the beginningless chain of lives. She lived in her little cottage. A small rice field her husband received as sacred gift to learning brought her sufficient rice, and the piece of land that surrounded her cottage, with its clumps of bamboos, a few cocoanut palms, a few mangoes and lichies, with the help of the kindly village folks brought forth sufficient vegetables all the year round. For the rest, she worked hard every day for hours at the spinning wheel.

She was up long before the rosy dawn touched the

tufted heads of the palms, long before the birds had begun to warble in their nests, and sitting in her bed—a mat on the ground covered with a blanket—repeated the sacred names of the holy women of the past, saluted the ancient sages, recited the sacred names of Narayana, the refuge of mankind, of Siva the merciful, of Tara the Saviour mother and above all prayed to Him her heart most loved, Krishna, who took the form of Gopala, a cowherd, to teach and save mankind, and rejoiced that by one day she was nearer to him who had gone ahead, and with him nearer to Him the cowherd by a day.

Before the light of the day she had her bath in the neighboring stream, praying that her mind be made as clean by the mercy of Krishna, as the water did clean her body. Then she put on her fresh-washed white cotton garment, collected some flowers, rubbed a piece of sandal-wood on a circular stone with a little water to make a fragrant paste, gathered a few sweet-scented Tulsi leaves and retired into a little room in the cottage, kept apart for worship. In this room she kept her baby cowherd; and on a small wooden throne, under a small silk canopy on a small velvet cushion, almost covered with flowers, was placed a bronze image of Krishna as a baby. Her mother's heart could only be satisfied by conceiving God as her baby. Many and many a time her learned husband had talked to her of Him who is preached in the Vedas, the formless, the infinite, the impersonal. She listened with all attention and the conclusion was always the same,—it must be true what is written in the Vedas, but, oh! it was so immense, so far off, and she, only a weak, ignorant woman; and then, it was also written: "In whatsoever form one seeks me, I

reach him in that form, for all mankind are but following the paths I laid down for them,"—and that was enough. She wanted to know no more. And there she was,—all of the devotion, of faith, of love her heart was capable of was there in Krishna, the baby-cowherd, and all that heart entwined round the visible cowherd, this little bronze image. Then again she had heard: "Serve me as you would a being of flesh and blood, with love and purity, and I accept that all." So she served as she would a master, a beloved teacher, above all, as she would serve the apple of her eye, her only child, her son.

So she bathed and dressed the image, burned incense before it and for offering?—oh she was so poor!—but with tears in her eyes she remembered her husband reading from the books: "I accept with gladness even flowers, fruits and water, whatever is offered with love," and she offered: "Thou for whom the world of flowers bloom, accept my few common flowers; Thou who feedest the universe, accept my poor offerings of fruits. I am weak, I am ignorant. I do not know how to approach thee, how to worship thee, my God, my cowherd, my child; let my worship be pure, my love for thee self-less; and if there is any virtue in worship let it be thine, grant me only love, love that never asks for anything—'never seeks for anything but love.'" Perchance the mendicant in his morning call was singing in the little yard:

Thy knowledge, man! I value not,
It is thy love I fear;
It is thy love that shakes my throne,
Brings God to human tear.
For love behold the Lord of all,
The formless, ever free,

Is made to take the human form
To play and live with thee.
What learning, they of Vrinda's groves,
The herdsmen ever got?
What science, girls that milked the kine?
They loved, and Me they bought.

Then in the Divine the mother-heart found her earthly son Gopala, named after the Divine cowherd. And the soul which would almost mechanically move among its earthly surroundings,—which, as it were, was constantly floating in a heavenly ether ready to drift away from contact of things material, found its earthly moorings in her child. It was the only thing left to her to pile all her earthly joys and love on. Were not her movements, her thoughts, her pleasures, her very life for that little one, that bound her to life?

For years she watched over the day-to-day unfolding of that baby life with all a mother's care; and now that he was old enough to go to school, how hard she worked for months to get the necessities for the young scholar.

The necessities however were few. In a land where men contentedly pass their lives poring over books in the light of a mud lamp, with an ounce of oil in which is a thin cotton wick, and a rush mat the only furniture about them, the necessities of a student are not many. Yet there were some, and even those cost many a day of hard work to the poor mother.

(To be continued)

The goddess of salvation prostrates herself at the feet of one whose soul has been entranced with the deep joy of devotion to God.—*Ramprasad.*

IN THE HOURS OF MEDITATION

AND the Voice that dwells in the Silence speaking in the hours of meditation said unto my soul: "Come, my son, into the deep, deep Quiet. Beyond the tumult of personality, beyond its manifold experience, come into the Great Peace. Do not be troubled by the storm of passion or desire on the surface; do not be alarmed. Though the clouds gather thickest, beyond them the sun doth shine. In the Stillness the heart throbs best with quiet rapture. Make thyself open to the Love that is everywhere. How musical is the Stillness! What Peace it brings forth! O, for the Infinite Stillness! O, for the Infinite Peace!

"In all eternity not one good thought, not one spiritual longing is lost. Therefore go thou beyond the power of time; in that dost thou think great thoughts, and in that mayest thy soul desire the Infinite. In thine own mind doth thine own universe exist. And thou canst make eternity reveal even within the flux of time; by thy thoughts thou canst reach out beyond the bounds of space.

"O what power, what sense of exaltation, what immeasurable sensing of Immensity come with the knowledge that the Self is free, nothing can bind It! That thou comest or that thou goest, that thou dost do or that thou dost not do—what are these! They are but episodes within the great dream of life. They are but currents within the running stream of time—while the Self is the Eternal.

"Deep—deep—fathomlessly deep is the Silence;—the Peace is immeasurable. Blot out all images of sense and thought. They are only refractions;—go thou within the Light Itself."

And the Voice added, "O in the Self there is no sense of self; boundless, everlasting, absolutely free, it is the Unit knowing no diversity. In the kingdom of the Self there is no room for thou, or I, or he. It is all That—the Om Tat Sat, incomparable and inexpressible. Who knows that Self, yea verily he *knows*.

"True love is that yearning to be free, to become merged in the Infinite. True love is that great yearning for the Silence. It will not be disturbed. It reaches out silently yet all-comprehensively. It is irresistible. It gains the Goal. Wherein all the gods merge, wherein all sound is lost, wherein form is swallowed up and thought remains un-thought, wherein life and death no more exist,—know That to be the Self. Wherein struggle ceases, wherein Realization lies, wherein all that is relative is blotted out, wherein Beauty and Holiness, Sin and Terror, Good and Evil, lose distinction, wherein the mind in contemplation becomes omniscient, know That to be the Self.

"My son, there is a Height beyond the greatest heights, there is Divinity beyond the greatest gods. There is the background of the Indestructible. All vanishes, all is blotted out,—that which endures is the Self."

And as the Voice became still it seemed as if my soul arose into the Vastness. Then "I" was not. There was only the Light—the Light.—*Prabuddha Bharata*.

In Life's play the player of the other side is hidden from us. We know that His play is always fair, just, and patient, but we always know to our cost that He never overlooks a mistake. It's for you to find out why your ears are boxed.—*Huxley*.

THE WREATH OF GEMS.

By Sri Sankaracharya.

(Note.—A free translation of the thirty-two verses known as "Maniratnamala."

The dialogue between Guru and disciple forms a rare collection of questions and answers most valuable to those who truly seek to go beyond the plane of birth and death.)

(Continued from the March Number.)

21. Which is the most formidable of all the enemies of man? It is the passion to possess, attended, as it is, with anger, untruthfulness, and avarice and thirst for more. What is never appeased by gratification? The aforesaid passion indeed. What is the seed of all misery? The thought of "I" and "mine."

22. What is the embellishment of face? Literacy. What is truth? That which is beneficial to all beings. What is the best thing to be given to all, at all times? Freedom from fear of all kinds.

23. At whose destruction comes the final liberation? Mind's. In which state is there no more fear? In the state of perfect emancipation or realization. What is the keenest of all the darts (that pricks a man)? One's own ignorance. Who are the objects of respect? Those from whom we learn anything and the elders.

24. What should be done by the thoughtful mind in all haste at the approach of the great destroyer, Death? Then, with all mind and speech one must meditate on the lotus-feet of Murari (Vishnu), the great savior.

25. What like thieves (takes away one's valuable possessions)? Evil propensities. Who graces an assembly? The learned. What brings happiness and solace in life? Learning. What augments by imparting to others? Learning.

26. On what quarters ought we always to look with distrust and fear? On public opinion and the wild mazes of this forest-like world. Who is a friend and who can truly be called one's parents? He who helps one in times of adversity is the friend, and those who help to maintain one are the parents.

27. What knowing, nought is left to be known any more? The Lord of the universe, who is all good, all peace, and whose very Self is Absolute Bliss and Knowledge. By realizing which the whole world stands realized? By the realization of the Absolute Brahman, Who is the Self of all.

28. What are rarely to be found in this world? A spiritual guide, who has himself seen the Lord—the company of a real sage—a mind really struggling to attain to the perfect realization of the absolute and infinite Being, the Brahman—the renunciation of everything for the Lord—and the realization of the truth "I am that Absolute Bliss."

29. Who is the most beastly among the beasts? One who does not practice what is right and virtuous (dharma), and also he who is devoid of Self-Knowledge, even after a thorough study of the Scriptures.

(Concluded in the May Number.)

ANNOUNCEMENT.

The management wishes to state that the publication of the magazine, *Voice of Freedom*, will be continued. All those wishing to renew their subscriptions will please send their remittances to the Manager, VOICE OF FREEDOM, 2963 Webster St., San Francisco, Cal.

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Voice of Freedom

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION FOR THE
GROWTH OF ALL PHASES OF HUMAN LIFE



MAY
1915

ISSUED BY SAN FRANCISCO VEDANTA SOCIETY
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No. 2

HOW TO SEE GOD.

By the late Swami Trigunatita



THROUGH the ordinary ways, and by the help of science, we see many things; but no science, nor the finest instrument it has ever or will ever produce can make us see God. Is it then impossible to see Him? Vedanta philosophers say it is possible, but not with these mortal eyes. Seeing is perceiving with the senses, whether through the eyes, hearing or touch. The eyes are the best organs of perception, yet their limitations cause doubts to arise in the mind. The naked eyes see many stars, yet the telescope discloses many more to us, and the more perfect the instrument the less reliable is our natural sight proven to be. And yet the most perfect instrument cannot discover God to us.

The Vedantist says we are to see God and enjoy Him in becoming Him. The dualist says to eat sugar is better than to become sugar. If we eat sugar we enjoy it; if we become sugar we cannot enjoy it. But the true Vedantist sees both are the same thing. When we can truly see God we become God.

If we concentrate deeply on anything, by the law of nature we become transformed into that thing—become one with it. Then how shall we see God? For a person who has seen God becomes God, and can no more re-

turn to worldly existence. A few have returned; such incarnations as Buddha, Jesus, Krishna, have come back to show the way. They could see God, but cannot show Him to us; the utmost they can do is to show the way to Him.

The soul has wandered through many experiences and explored many places on its pilgrimage to find God. Consciously or unconsciously it is ever searching for Him. The task is to see God—that is the highest aspiration man can have. But he may have to wait, to go through thousands of experiences still before finding Him.

Consider the mother who has lost her child; her search is untiring; she inquires of every one she meets for tidings of her child. She cannot eat, sleep, nor rest till the child is found. Consider, too, the child: its cries for its mother are unceasing. He will not be pacified—no candy, cake or toy will make him forget even for a moment. He chokes with deep sobs and nothing will console him. And when the mother comes and he sees her and feels her and enjoys her, then he may accept the candy or toy—not before.

We, who are bent on loving the objects of the world, how can we expect to see God? Have we ever cried for God as the lost child cries for its mother? Have we ever felt the anguish for God which the mother suffers when her child is lost? Have we ever had a burning desire for God?

We use many words, but have we lived for God? If we have tried, still our minds and senses are dulled by contact with the world, like a rusty wire, which cannot give pure and sweet vibrations. We must clean and

make bright the wires—the mind and the senses—then can we cry to God, then shall we pray so ardently that our prayers will reach the throne of God and He will be moved to come to us. But it must be with our whole heart and life and soul; nothing short of it.

By closing the out-going senses and turning inward, then may we learn to see God. If we close our eyes to the world, the inner sight, the "eye of wisdom" will grow. With that eye we will be able to see God. Patience and practice in concentration will cause the inner eye to open. By its light the inner self will be revealed and when the Self is revealed we will see God and become God. Even the mortal sight and all the senses will become so pure as to be able to see God. Then and then only shall the soul be satisfied.

If your soul is habitually fixed on God and the things of God, it will sit very loose to the things of this life, passing through them and fulfilling all needful duties without being absorbed or captivated by them; untrammelled by the world's perplexities, the sound of which scarcely penetrates within that higher spiritual atmosphere in which you will live. Herein lies real peace of mind and true detachment. The soul that has learnt to stay itself upon God does not care to risk the loss of such heavenly rest for the turmoil of this world's interests, and with the aid of His Grace it fulfils all needful exterior avocations without being soiled or disturbed by their contact. Those who attain to this habit of mind will be able to lead the busiest life without anxiety or restlessness, calmly plying their daily tasks in the world, while their heart abides in its inner retirement with God.

—Guillorc.

EVOLUTION OF THE SOUL.

By Swami Abhedananda.

(Continued from the April Number.)

SPIRITUAL childhood leads to spiritual youth, and that youth begins when we commence to realize God in nature, God in us, that we are like the parts of one stupendous whole, and God is like a circle whose circumference is nowhere but whose center is everywhere. God is in you. There is a center in each one of you of which the circumference is infinite. If you can realize God in that center in yourselves, then you will have realized God in the whole universe. God is working through you, but you do not know it. You think you are an individual, that you are working yourself. You are Mr. so and so, and you are going to do this and that. But who are you, pray? I would like to know. Who is this Mr. so and so and Mrs. so and so? You have taken a certain name and assumed a certain character. You have forgotten that this world is a stage upon which you are representing a husband, wife, father, mother, or child. You are playing your role, but you are playing unconsciously, and therefore you suffer and enjoy. Suppose a man is playing the part of a beggar on the stage. If he is rich to begin with, and he is playing the part of a beggar and forgets himself, and takes upon himself the idea that he is a real beggar, do you think he would enjoy that play? He would be most miserable. But so long as he knows he is playing the part of a beggar, he is happy and plays well. That is the case with us. Find out who you are in reality, and play with consciousness. You are the mighty Lord. You are the omnipotent and om-

niscient Being. You are just engaged within the limitations of this body, but you do not know it. Wake up and see, and that awakening will be the birth of the soul, the new birth. You will be born again. Unless you are born again, you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.

This spiritual birth is the beginning of spiritual evolution. This comes when we find out that we are living like slaves. We do not live the ideal life. We are attached to this condition, and this attachment drags us down to misery, to the abyss of sorrow and suffering. We must overcome this. And that struggle is at the bottom of all religions, of all social ethics, of all social reforms, and, in fact, of all civilization. A man cannot be civilized unless he realizes the higher laws, the ethical laws which govern our lives. For instance, Buddha explained that hatred is never conquered by hatred, but by love. This is the everlasting ethical law. Christ said, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." That is an ethical law. But how can we do that unless we know who we are in reality and what relation we bear to our neighbor, to our country, to all humanity, nay, to all living creatures? Therefore, spiritual awakening comes to us when we struggle: then we begin to see that God is no longer far beyond our reach, but he is with us. He is in us. He is in nature. He is no longer extra-cosmic, but intra-cosmic, dwelling in nature just as we have souls in our bodies. The Lord of the nature governs from within. He is the soul of the universe, and the material world is his gigantic body. In that body plays the infinite soul. And He rules the universe, not from outside, not, as many believe, from on high, from His seat on a throne, but right here within us, within nature, from in-

side. All evolution is from within. He creates, because he projects out of his own body on the external space. He does not create out of nothing. The eternal energy of the universe which is enclosed in all matter is his material body.

"The Lord has infinite number of eyes, infinite number of ears, infinite number of mouths. He sees through all eyes. He hears through all ears. He thinks through all brains. He works through all hands." We do not realize the presence of Divinity within us. But wake up, my friends! God is dwelling in you and He is working through you. You are nothing but an instrument. The body is made by nature. You have to realize this, before you attain to perfection, that you are one with God. Do not separate yourself from God. God is all in all. There is nothing outside of Him. What you call yourself as an individual entity is a part and parcel of the Divine Being, is a part of the whole. As a part of the whole cannot remain without being related to the whole, so you cannot remain without being related to the Infinite Being, whose body nature is, and whose soul is the Lord of creation.

That is the beginning of qualified non-dualism. That is spiritual youth. In that spiritual youth, we have God like a huge bonfire, and the individual souls emanating from that infinite bonfire are like sparks. Each spark is an individual soul, just as eternal as God Himself. Nature is eternal. Matter is eternal. Force is eternal. There is no such thing as destruction or annihilation, no such thing as creation of anything out of nothing. Now we are living in an infinite and eternal universe, and we are eternal beings. Is not that grand? Is not that beau-

tiful? Where is the fear of death, then? We are all immortal by our birthright. We can never die. Think of it! Why, you can move mountains if you have that thought. You do not crouch like a beggar for a little knowledge here and a little knowledge there, but you realize that eternal river of knowledge as within you. You are mighty, great. It takes a long time to realize how great you are, how good you are in reality. It is only a delusion that has kept us from that knowledge, and Vedanta comes to help us, to open our eyes to the eternal truth that we are children of that Immortal Bliss, that Infinite Brahman; not only children, but we *are* one. There is nothing else but God. When you walk in the street, remember that God is walking through you. Remember that God is your best companion in troubles and distress. He is your best friend. He is your father, mother, brother, sister, child, wife, husband, everything. All human relations can be attributed to the Infinite Being, because all these relations are nothing but the expressions on the human plane of the eternal relations which exist between the individual soul and the Infinite Being, the Lord of the universe. We are only playing these parts, so that some day, when we reach perfection, we will realize that these relations must be turned back to the Infinite Being. When you love a child, see God in the child. Do you think a mother loves a child for the atoms and molecules that make up the child? The mother loves the soul of the child. If there is no soul in the child's body, she does not care for it. The husband loves the wife not for the body of the wife, but for the soul. Vedanta tells us that a wife loves the husband not for the body, but for the soul, because all love is

nothing but an attraction between two souls. Really, love is the same attraction that is manifested in inorganic nature in the form of chemical affinity. An attraction between two atoms, when those atoms are spiritual atoms, is called love. Love is always on the spiritual plane. Really, love is God, and we cannot understand or realize real love until we understand the soul. The soul of the lover and the soul of the beloved are one and the same. That is the highest love. If one is struck, the other will respond. Have you got that love in your life? Love is not a passion. It is the highest thing. The greatest thing in the world is love, and that love comes through knowledge of oneness, realization of oneness, oneness with all. Once we were walking on the lawn, and Ramakrishna said, "Do not walk on the grass. I feel as if you were walking on my breast. I cannot bear it. It gives me a terrible pain. Stop! I cannot see it." He made himself one with nature. And that is love. That love will come to us when we understand whom we are in reality, when we have attained to spiritual maturity.

Spiritual maturity deals with absolute oneness. You know the story of Buddha walking with his disciples along a country road, and he heard that a great prince was going to sacrifice a goat, in order to exempt himself from sins. That was a custom in India at that time,—vicarious atonement. The priest used to gather all the sins of these men and women and transfer the sins upon the goat and the poor goat had to be killed. All the sins were taken out of the men and women who wanted to become free from sins and become virtuous, and the goat was the victim. Then the goat was sacrificed by the priests and the blood sprinkled on the heads of these

men and women and then they were free. When I was a boy, I went through that ceremony myself. So, you see that conception that Christ's blood will save you from sins did not originate with Christ. Not alone an old Jewish conception, it was quite universal among all nations.

So, five hundred years before Christ, Buddha was traveling and heard that this prince was going to sacrifice a goat. He went and asked the prince, "What are you going to do?" The prince told him, and he said, "What for?" The prince said, "To attain to virtue." Buddha replied: "By sacrificing a goat you cannot be free from sins. If, by sacrificing a life, you can be free from sins, sacrifice me and save the life of that goat. If I have gained any virtue during all of my penance, I will give you that virtue. Let that be yours. Save the life of the goat. I cannot see the goat killed for your sin." Buddha would not listen to any argument that was given by the priest. He insisted, saying, "Sacrifice me," and fell prostrate at the feet of the king. The king's heart was moved and he felt very compassionate. Tears rolled down his cheeks, and he said, "Lord, who art Thou? I do not know Thee, but Thou art greater than all these priests put together." And he let the goat go, drove away all the priests, and became a disciple of Buddha.

Buddha himself felt one with all lower animals. And that is love. And that kind of love will come to us when we realize who we are in reality, and what God is. At present we talk about love. Real love is far, far away from our conception. But when we attain to that realization of the Infinite Being as dwelling within us all, that we are parts of the Infinite Spirit, that realization

will help us in attaining to Christhood or Buddhahood. We will become Christ, when we attain to that knowledge; and spiritual perfection will be reached when we realize our immortal nature, our infinite nature, our eternal nature as spirit, as parts of the omnipotent Being.

Along with this spiritual progress and evolution of the conception of God, there will come many stages, which are described in the different systems of Yoga, with the practice of which individual seekers after truth would be considered real beginners in the path to spiritual perfection.

(To be continued)

THE VEDANTA ASHRAMA.

In the heart of the Berkshire hills, about four miles from West Cornwall, Connecticut, Swami Abhedananda opened in 1907 and still conducts an Ashrama, where those desirous of studying spiritual truths through Nature and of applying them to practical life may go. The Ashrama is 70 acres in extent, of diversified country, with groves of pines, oaks, maple and chestnut trees. Accommodations are provided at reasonable rates, there is a well stocked library of works on spiritual philosophy for the use of the students, the food is plentiful and the best of its kind, all grown at the Ashrama. During the summer, beginning July first and continuing until the end of October, there is a Summer School and lectures and classes are held under the shade of the trees, or in the library, if the weather is unpropitious.

The rates for room and board for one person are as follows: \$1.50 a day; furnished tent with board, \$10.00 a week; furnished tent without board, \$5.00 a week. Address all communications to the Manager of the Ashrama, West Cornwall, Conn.

SAYINGS OF ŚRĪ RĀMAKRISHŪA

¶ If a man sees a pleader, he naturally thinks of cases and causes; similarly, on seeing a pious devotee the man remembers his God and the hereafter.

¶ Many are the names of God and infinite the forms that lead us to know Him. In whatsoever name or form you desire to call Him, in that very form and name you will see Him.

¶ As one can ascend to the top of a house by means of a ladder or a bamboo or a staircase or a rope, so divers are the ways and means to approach God, and every religion in the world shows one of these ways.

¶ In a potter's shop there are vessels of different shapes and forms,—pots, jars, dishes, plates, etc., but all are made of one clay. So God is one, but is worshipped in different ages and climes under different names and aspects.

¶ You see many stars at night in the sky but find them not when the sun rises; can you say that there are no stars in the heaven of day? So, O man! because you behold not God in the days of your ignorance, say not that there is no God.

¶ As one and the same material, water, is called by different names by different peoples, one calling it water, another *eau*, a third *aqua*, and another *pani*, so the one Sat-chit-ananda, the Everlasting-Intelligent-Bliss, is invoked by some as God, by some as Allah, by some as Jehovah, by some as Hari, and by others as Brahman.

THE STORY OF THE BOY GOPALA.

By the Late Swami Vivekananda

(Continued from April Number.)

HOW for days she toiled over her wheel to buy Gopala a new cotton dhoti and a piece of cotton chadar, the under and upper covering,—the small mat in which Gopala was to put his bundle of palm leaves for writing, his reed pens, and then carry the mat rolled up under his arm to be used as a seat at school,—and the inkstand, and what joy to her it was, when on a day of good omen Gopala attempted to write his first letters, only a mother's heart, a poor mother's, can know.

But to-day there is a dark shadow in her mind. Gopala is frightened to go alone through the wood. Never before had she felt her widowhood, her loneliness, her poverty so bitter. For a moment it was dark, but she recalled to her mind what she heard of the eternal promise: "Those that depend on Me giving up all other thoughts, to them I carry Myself whatever is necessary." And she was one of the souls who can believe.

So the mother wiped her tears and told her child that he need not fear. For in those woods lived another son of hers tending cattle, and also called Gopala; and if he was ever afraid passing through them, he had only to call on brother Gopala!

The child was that mother's son and he believed.

That day, coming home from school through the wood, Gopala was frightened and called upon his brother Gopala the cowherd: "Brother cowherd, are you here? Mother said you are, and I am to call on thee: I am frightened being alone." And a voice came from behind

the trees: "Don't be afraid, little brother, I am here, go home without fear."

Thus every day the boy called and the voice answered. The mother heard of it with wonder and love; and she instructed her child to ask the brother of the wood to show himself the next time.

The next day the boy, when passing through the woods, called upon his brother. The voice came as usual, but the boy asked the brother in the woods to show himself to him. The voice replied, "I am busy to-day, brother, and cannot come." But the boy insisted and out of the shades of trees came the Cowherd of the Woods, a boy dressed in the garb of cowherds, with a little crown on his head in which were peacock's feathers, and the cowherd's flute in his hands.

And they were so happy; they played together for hours in the woods, climbing trees, gathering fruits and flowers—the widow's Gopala and the Gopala of the woods, till it was almost late for school. Then the widow's Gopala went to school with a reluctant heart, and nearly forgot all his lesson, his mind eager to return to the woods and play with his brother.

Months passed this wise. The poor mother heard of it day by day, and in the joy of this Divine mercy forgot her widowhood, her poverty, and blessed her miseries a thousand times.

Then there came some religious ceremonies which the teacher had to perform in honor of his ancestors. These village teachers, managing alone a number of boys and receiving no fixed fees from them, have to depend a great deal upon presents when the occasion requires it.

Each pupil brought in his share, in goods or money,

and Gopala, the orphan, the widow's son!—the other boys smiled a smile of contempt on him when they talked of the presents they were bringing.

That night Gopala's heart was heavy, and he asked his mother for some present for the teacher, and the poor mother had nothing.

But she determined to do what she had been doing all her life, to depend on the Cowherd, and told her son to ask, from his brother Gopala in the forest, for some present for the teacher.

The next day, after Gopala had met the cowherd boy in the woods as usual, and after they had some games together, Gopala told his brother of the forest the grief that was in his mind and begged him to give him something to present his teacher with.

"Brother Gopala," said the cowherd, "I am only a cowherd you see, and have no money, but take this pot of cream as from a poor cowherd and present it to your teacher."

Gopala, quite glad that he now had something to give his teacher, more so because it was a present from his brother in the forest, hastened to the home of the teacher and stood with an eager heart behind a crowd of boys handing over their presents to the teacher. Many and varied were the presents they had brought, and no one thought of looking even at the present of the orphan.

The neglect was quite disheartening; tears stood in the eyes of Gopala, when by a sudden stroke of fortune the teacher happened to take notice of him. He took the small pot of cream from Gopala's hand, and poured the cream into a big vessel, when to his wonder the pot

filled up again! Again he emptied the contents into a bigger vessel, again it was full, and thus it went on, the small pot filling up quicker than he could empty it.

Then amazement took hold of everyone, and the teacher took the poor orphan in his arms and enquired about the pot of cream.

Gopala told his teacher all about his brother cowerd in the forest, how he answered his call, how he played with him and how at last he gave him the pot of cream.

The teacher asked Gopala to take him to the woods and show him his brother of the woods, and Gopala was only too glad to take his teacher there.

The boy called upon his brother to appear but there was no voice even that day. He called again and again. No answer. And then the boy entreated his brother in the forest to speak, else his teacher would think he was not speaking the truth. Then came the voice as from a great distance:

"Gopala, thy mother's and thy love and faith brought me to thee, but tell thy teacher he will have to wait a long while yet."—*Prabuddha Bharata*.

Meditation is for beginners; affection for those who are advancing; contemplation for the perfect. In meditation the mind seeks; in affection the heart desires; in contemplation the soul finds what it sought and enjoys what it desired. The mind labors in meditation, the heart sighs in affection, and both mind and heart rest in contemplation. Thus the divine union is the enjoyment of God which the soul has sought in meditation, which it has acquired through affection, and which it has found through contemplation.—*St. Francis de Sales*.

IN THE HOURS OF MEDITATION

WHEN my soul had entered the Silence of meditation, the Voice of the Guru said:—"My son, do I not know all thy weaknesses? Why dost thou worry? Is not life beset with trials and tribulations? But thou art a Man. Let not faint-heartedness take possession of thy soul. Remember that within thee is the Almighty Spirit. Thou canst be what thou chooseth. There is only one obstacle,—thyself. The body rebels, the mind wavers,—but of the end be sure. For nothing can ultimately withstand the power of the Spirit. If thou art sincere with thyself, if in the depth of thy self there is integrity then all is well. Nothing can have full or final possession of thee. Cultivate openness of mind and heart. Conceal nothing from me with reference to thyself. Study thy mind as though it were a thing apart from thee. Speak frankly concerning thyself to those with whom thy soul finds true association. For the gates of hell itself cannot stand against a soul which is sincere. Sincerity is the one thing needed.

"After all, most of thy faults arise out of the body-consciousness. Treat thy body as though it were a lump of clay. Make it subservient to the purposes of thy will. Character is everything, and the power of character is the power of will. This is the whole secret of the spiritual life; this is the whole meaning of religious effort. Behold the civilizations. How man glories over the pomp of sense powers and sense realities. But at bottom it is all sex and food. The mind of the majority has arisen out of these two all-comprising facts. We cover the corpse with flowers, but it is all the same a

corpse. Therefore, let the child of the spirit be deep in his study of what the world calls great. For at heart it is all putrid, being grossly corporeal and physical. Have nothing to do with the ephemeral things of the world or with its attractions. Tear off the masks with which the body hides its shame. Enter into that insight where thou knowest that thou art not of these things. Thou art the Spirit; and know that the rise or fall of empires, the tendencies of cultures or of civilizations are of little import to the highest spiritual consciousness. Know That which is unseen to be truly great; know That to be truly desirable.

"Be thou the child of poverty; have thou an intense passion for purity. Lust and Gold make up the fabric of the worldly spirit. Root these out from thy nature. Know all tendencies thereunto to be poisons, one and all. Vomit out from thy nature all defilement. Wash thy soul clean from all impurities. See life as it is; and then shalt thou know it as *Māya*, neither good, nor yet evil, but something to be utterly given up, for it is all of the body and of the body-idea. Harken to each whispering of thy higher nature. Seize avariciously each message of thy Self. For Spiritual opportunity is a rare privilege, and unless thou takest heed, when the Voice enters the Silence, thou being busied with the call of the senses shalt not hear It; and thy personality shall fall into the clutches of habits that will cause it to perish. Only one message have I for thee: Remember that thou art the Spirit. The Power is behind thee. To be sincere is to be free. Be loyal to thy spiritual inheritance, for to be loyal is likewise to be free. Let every step which thou dost take be a step forward, and as thou goest along

the highway of life, more and more shalt thou feel that thou art free. If thou hast integrity behind thee thou canst face all men. Be true to thyself. Then shall thy words ring with the accents of reality. Thou shalt speak the language of realization. And thou shalt gain the power which shall make others whole.

"Each man radiates the force of his character. One can never hide himself. If one is physically deformed, all men see the deformity. And if thou art spiritually deformed, likewise intuitively all men shall know. For when thou speakest of the things of the soul, men will feel that thou speakest that which is not in thy heart. Thou wilt not be able to communicate unto them anything whatsoever of the spiritual life. For thou thyself art not in and of it. Therefore, if thou wouldst become a Prophet of the Most High, busy thyself with self-reform. Keep guard over thy nature; watch every impulse; spiritualize thy instincts. Be sincere. But I would charge thee to keep thy realizations in reserve. Cast not thy pearls before swine. If thou dost feel wondrous states of the Spirit, remain silent, lest by loud talk thou dost detract from their intensity. Ponder over what thou receivest. Go with all things into the silence of the Spirit. Guard all thy wisdom and all thy realizations as a thief guards his possessions. Thou must conserve thyself; and when thou hast practiced silence for some time, then shall that with which thy heart has become full overflow; and thou shalt become a treasure and a power unto men.

"There is one path of austerity which I recommend to thee. Meditate on the terrible. For the terrible is everywhere. Truly, has it been said by a Sage, 'Every-

thing that one touches is pain.' Know this not in a morbid, but in a triumphant sense. In all mystical experience, in one form or another, thou shalt find this worship of the terrible. In reality, it is NOT the worship of the terrible. It is terrible only to him who dwells in the senses. Pleasing and terrible are terms which have meaning only to one who is the bond-slave of the body idea. But thou hast gone beyond,—at least in thought and aspiration, if not in realization. By meditation on the terrible thou shalt assuredly overcome the lust of the senses. Thou shalt embrace the life of the soul. Thou shalt be made pure and free. And thus, more and more thou shalt become united with me, who am on the other side of life. Never see life physically; study it psychically. Realize it spiritually. Then immediately the whole purport of the spiritual life shall be made clear to thee. Thou shalt know why saints love poverty and purity and shun, by fight or flight, anything that savors of Lust and Gold.

"Let this suffice. Follow what I have said. Think over it until the nervous system takes it up, and the fever of these ideas and their loftiness and ecstasy course through thy veins, renew thy personality and make thee altogether whole."—*Prabuddha Bharata*.

There is no difference between God with attributes and God without attributes. That which is without attribute, form, beyond the reach of thought, becomes associated with attribute out of love for His devotees. But how can that which is without attributes become associated with attributes? Just as water crystallised into ice is not different from water.—*Tulsidas*.

BOOK REVIEW

How To Use New Thought In Home Life. A Key To Happy And Efficient Living For Husband, Wife and Children. By Elizabeth Towne. Published by The Elizabeth Towne Co., Holyoke, Mass., 1915.

This little book of 189 pages deals, as its name indicates, with the application of New Thought principles to home life. Most of the material has been gleaned from letters written by the author in response to appeals made for aid in dealing with complicated domestic situations, and, within its own limits, covers a wide range of topics. The style is clear and convincing, and the author does not hesitate to point out what seems to her to be the real cause of the trouble even at the risk of seeming harsh. She constantly urges her readers to concentrate their attention upon the good qualities of those about them and to forget the rest.

The recognition of the importance of our mental attitude towards our environments, and that the power of people and things to annoy us we give to them by our own faulty mental outlook, is gaining ground. But it requires courage to face issues squarely and to place the responsibility, no matter how unflattering it may be to our self-love, where it belongs—namely, on ourselves. But it is the only way out of the tangle of things, and the results in strength and calmness will more than repay the individual for forcing himself to the bar of self-judgment. That this little book has a wide field of usefulness before it there can be no doubt.

"The mind of a sage, even when angered, is never perturbed. Can a man heat the waters of the sea with a lighted straw?"—*Hitopadesha*.

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No. 3

POWERS OF THE DIVINE MIND.

By the late Swami Trigunatita.



CAN such a thing as mind be Divine? Mind is, really speaking, human. How can it be Divine? How can it be made Divine? Is it possible for it ever to be made Divine? Mind is a substance which is within this frail, human body; how can such a limited substance, which is quite mortal, be Divine? Divinity means an eternal something which is infinite. Being infinite, how can it come within the domain of powers? How can powers proceed from such state or place or region or whatever it be (it cannot be expressed in words) which is called Absolute? No powers can proceed from there. Still, our subject speaks of the powers of the Divine mind. That means that the same mind with which we are now working in this life, the same mind which is in our body of material substance, so to say, is growing all the time. The more you live not to eat and drink but to learn, the higher it will grow.

You understand that this human plane is not the last thing, is not the destination, is not the terminus. There is something yet to be attained. No matter how much you progress, there is always something yet to be known. That is the nature, the characteristic of the mind, be it human or otherwise. But the question is, whether it is

possible for this human mind to grow as high as divine, as high as immortal, as high as absolute. It is very possible.

It is not that this plane, as many persons believe, is the last, and that the last day of judgment will come to you when you pass out of the body; nor that after the day of judgment you will go to this place or to the other; nor that only those two places are in existence and this earth—the third—in the middle. Those very people who believe in the three places, the earth, the human plane, being in the middle, heaven above, the other place, where we do not know,—even those people speak of and believe in the meanings conveyed by the words "eternal," "infinite," etc. If there can be such a thing as eternal, then how can there be an end? One extreme is heaven, the other hell. You cannot put a limit. There must be eternal both ways, infinite both ways.

In speaking of the influence of Mâyâ, or Nature, over us, we say that Mâyâ has an end. But there we give a different meaning to the word "end." It is not that Mâyâ absolutely ceases to exist, but we fly away from the region and the fetters of Mâyâ, of nature. We put an end to her influence over us and call it the end of Mâyâ. But as a matter of fact, Mâyâ never ceases to exist, and the same philosophy which deals with Mâyâ, the influence of nature over creation, will tell you that Mâyâ is beginningless. Now you must understand that whatever is without beginning must also be without end. Although in the middle, in the course of our progress we be subject to the influence of Mâyâ, when we put an end to the influence this Mâyâ becomes transformed into another state—a higher state.

Now, the Sanskrit word "Mâyâ", which corresponds to

the English word "Nature", has a very extensive meaning. Mâyâ both binds us to and redeems us from the world. This very Mâyâ binds us to all kinds of enjoyments, and this same Mâyâ helps us to get away from them.

We call Mâyâ the human plane, or plane of creation, plane of the universe, etc. That plane of the universe includes all those ideas of the three places, heaven, earth and hell. It is not that heaven (the word we generally use) is somewhere higher than this earth. It is not that hell, of which we are so very afraid, is somewhere else than this earth. All these places are on this earth, in this creation, within this universe. No matter where you go, you are still within the limits of creation, within this universe,—or, say another universe, if you like—still you are within God's creation.

When we dwelt on the subject of "Powers of the Human Mind," we showed that the powers of the mind transcended all other powers, even the powers and forces of nature, and also that the human mind includes all ideas of relative heaven. You can enjoy that heaven right where you are, in this very life. But where there is suffering, there will come some day, sooner or later, enjoyment.

Does anyone ever return from heaven? Wherever you go, you will have to enjoy or suffer, or both by turn. That is scientific; that is philosophical.

The Divine plane, as we are always given to understand, means a plane where there is neither happiness nor misery. According to Vedanta Philosophy, it is not a relative plane, a heaven which has a close relation to hell, or at least to earth. That is no heaven for human

beings, for rational beings, for persons who are striving hard to attain to the state of bliss, eternal happiness. We are to understand that by the powers of the Divine mind we are going to a place from which we shall never have to return.

Discontent is a characteristic of the human mind. We are growing naturally, all the time. Nature is our guiding principle, whether we know it or not. The Divine mind we do not know yet. But this human mind, when it rises higher, in this very life, on this very plane, amidst these circumstances, will tell us that we want more and more, still more and more. The more we get, the more we want. There is no limit, no satisfaction. Our nature will dictate to us. No matter how much we consult our mind, tell it to be satisfied with whatever we get, it will obey maybe for a few days; then the desires spring up again, perhaps with redoubled force, and drive us to work towards their fulfillment. If we cannot fulfill our desires, we try to explain to our mind that the desires were not so good: that they would have given pain and suffering, nothing else.

We stop desiring, but only for a while. Again we try the same thing, but with a veiled explanation that we are doing it for good—that this time the desires will be fulfilled from a higher motive. But that is false. We have desires because earthly nature is guiding us.

What do we learn from these experiences? That everything is for good; no matter in what way events happen, everything is meant for good. When we suffer from unfulfilled desires, we learn that we want more and we cannot stop our desire to know more, to experience more. To experience more means to know more. En-

joyment means knowledge. All kinds of experiences, all kinds of enjoyments, produce nothing else but knowledge, directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously. We desire still more, and again and again. No matter how often we are frustrated, still we desire; we want to know a little more, to pass through the same experiences again. That is the nature, the characteristic of the human mind—discontentment. And that very discontentment, when we are in a spiritual line, produces spiritual good, and, some day, will produce the greatest contentment.

The more we suffer, the more our desires are frustrated, the more our efforts are defeated, the higher we will grow. We will be an experienced soldier, and that soldier again can be a teacher. We have a proverb, "Once a patient, the next time the doctor." The mother teaches her daughters and sons,—be careful when you go out, be careful of society. And that mother, teacher, guardian, who has the greatest amount of experience can be the best and the highest teacher. Simply book-reading cannot help.

We are living to know, consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly. That means we are passing through discontentment. It means we are striving unconsciously. For what? For more, more, everything more, more. The longer we live, the more we desire to live. The more we enjoy the more we want. Discontent is everywhere, even in the spiritual life.

Many of you who are going along spiritual lines are dissatisfied and complain that you are not gaining much, that you ought to do more by this time. No matter how often you are told that discontentment is very bad; that all ideas of expectation and return, etc., must be given

up; that work must be done for the sake of work itself, from the sense of duty, not from any selfish motive,—still you do not understand, you want more. Although the teacher says: give up desires, give up the ideas of misery, etc., still you cannot. Your nature will not let you give them up, because you have not yet outgrown them. You will have to pass through those sufferings of discontentment, and struggle and fighting. As soon as the fighting ends you will arrive at a different plane.

(*To be continued*)

LIFE IN DENIAL

From the German of Paul Gerok, Translated by A. C. W.

Deny thyself! The Master teaches this
And all His words are gold. He knows the heart.
I willingly would follow Him in all.
And yet I cannot grasp so stern a law.
Who am I, if I must forsake myself?
It falls like blow on face, like pain on heart,
That penetrating word, "Deny thyself!"

Uphold thyself. Thou canst not better be
Than that which God intends thee to become.
Be just thyself; for that is thy true work.
A blade of grass ne'er strives to be a palm,
A tree remains a tree, a flower a flower.
Then bear this proverb deep enshrined—
Maintain thine individuality.
Whatever men may say—uphold thyself.

Ennoble self! Be diligent to tend
Each heaven-implemented germ of life.
Yet fear not wild offshoots to prune away,
That sweetest fruit may follow every bud.
So thus these seeming contradictions meet—
By cultivating good and checking ill,
Thou shalt uphold and yet deny thyself.

EVOLUTION OF THE SOUL.

By Swami Abhedananda.

(Continued from the May Number.)

FIRST of all, having ascended from the animal nature to the human plane, we realize that we are one with the body, that we are attached to physical conditions, that we seek comforts, and everything that is related to our bodies we love. Gradually we rise from that plane to a higher plane. Not only do we think of our bodies, but we think of our souls. When we are ethical, we do not think of enriching ourselves at the expense of others; we do not practice that gladiatorial law of the survival of the fittest. Our ethical nature demands the making of others fit to survive and the sacrificing of our own interests for the good of others. There is the beginning of ethical morality: to try to make others fit to survive.

Abraham Lincoln once was walking in the streets of Washington with a friend. He suddenly stooped down and picked up a beetle in his fingers. The beetle had been lying on its back in the dust, and Lincoln put it back on its legs. The friend said, "What are you doing?" And he replied, "I have found this beetle lying on its back, but I have put it back on its own legs." And that is ethics. If you see that your friends or neighbors need your help, make them stand on their own legs, without seeking any return for your labor, for your thought, for your work. Then you will be ethical. If, all your life, you can do that kind of work, you will attain to ethical perfection. And when ethical perfection is reached, your mind will be purified. The purification of the mind is the most important thing. When the heart is purified,

that is, made free from all selfish desires, from robbing others and gratifying our own desires at the expense of others—when that is removed by the practice of self-control, then the purification of the heart comes. And "blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." God-vision is only possible when the purification of the heart is attained. That is the second stage in the struggle in the spiritual evolution of the soul.

Then comes discrimination. When the heart is purified, we begin to discriminate the right from wrong, the real from the unreal, the eternal from the non-eternal, spirit from matter. And from discrimination comes the fourth stage, dispassion. We become unattached to those things which are non-eternal, which are not one with God, which are the results of ignorance and selfishness. That is real renunciation. Renunciation does not mean that we should throw our interests to the dogs, that we should throw our wives and children in the streets, and run. That is not renunciation. Renunciation is to see Divinity in every individual, and not to be attached to these conditions which you have imposed upon yourself through ignorance. When you realize God in everything, you not only practice love but you become one with everything, and that is real renunciation. It does not mean that the wife should be separated from the husband and that you should live like monks. That was the religion of the Middle Ages. In the Twentieth Century, we do not need such a religion. We need a religion that would harmonize the world and God. That is the first step towards the attainment, and the man conscious of the Divinity in himself sees Divinity everywhere. We must see the sameness in everything,

the same Divine Spirit. How can we see sameness when there is so much diversity? We must go down to the bottom of things. There is the sameness. In the qualifications, the different attributes which are in the mind, in the intellect, in the body, in the feelings, there is the diversity; but behind all these there is one. There is one canvas behind all portraits. One may be a portrait of Christ, another may be of Ramakrishna, but the canvas is the same. There are different manifestations, but if you go below the surface, you will see the sameness. And that sameness is the Absolute. That is Brahman. That is God. That is Divinity. And through dispassion comes non-attachment. Live in the world but be not of the world. Perform all the functions of daily life with joy and happiness. Enjoy life, but do not mistake sorrow for enjoyment, or unhappiness for happiness. Real happiness comes from within. Happiness does not come from the possession of external things. There is no happiness in the objects themselves. Just reason a little. You may think, when you look in the shop windows, that if you possessed those things shown there you would be happy. You are mistaken. Happiness is not embodied in those things. It is the feeling of possession that makes you happy. And where is it? In your own mind a certain desire rises and you want to gratify that desire. Every desire means suffering. Whatever you desire, it means wanting. You want to remove that suffering. When you feel that you have possessed that thing, you feel gratified and happy. But why don't you do that through discrimination? That you possess everything in the world and are happy all the time? You do not have to be a shop-lifter. Why do you crave these

things? Cannot you enjoy the beautiful things that are stored in the museum? You are the child of the Infinite Lord of the universe. What do you want? Also remember that you cannot carry anything from this world. You will have to leave all behind. The millionaire with all his millions will not be able to carry his own body to the grave. Is this world, and these things for enjoyment? All right: enjoy them. But understand what real happiness is, and then march onward, and stop not till the goal is reached. Then dispassion will be a real thing, and you will understand what renunciation means. And after renunciation comes enlightenment, the sixth stage; and after enlightenment, one attains the superconscious state. The soul realizes the truth, and does not come back to the world in ignorance, does not find this world a state of bondage, but a state of joy and happiness. No more doubts remain in his mind. He is free from all doubts. All questions cease. In that realization all the knots of the heart are torn asunder, all desires are fulfilled, all questions are answered, all doubts cease forever, and the infinite soul transcends all the laws of karma,—the laws of action and reaction and all other laws which bind the ordinary mortal. Then he is free. He realizes that freedom. Freedom and knowledge and love will come simultaneously. And there is the state of love, superconsciousness, no longer separate from God. We see that whatever is Thine is mine, and whatever is mine is Thine. Then and then alone, the individual attains to the realization of that ideal which has been the goal of spiritual evolution, the attainment of perfection. Then we can live in this world as perfected souls and realize the true meaning of that passage, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

SAYINGS OF ŚRĪ RÂMAKṚISHŪA

¶ Bow down and worship where others kneel, for where so many have been paying the tribute of adoration the kind Lord must manifest Himself, for He is all mercy.

¶ As a soft clay easily takes an impression, but not the stone, so also the Divine Wisdom impresses itself on the the heart of a devotee, but not on that of the bound soul.

¶ As the same sugar is made into various figures of birds and beasts, so the one Sweet Mother Divine is worshipped in various climes and ages under various names and forms.

¶ As the young wife in a family shows her love and respect to her father-in-law, mother-in-law, and every other member of the family, and at the same time loves her husband more than these; similarly, being firm in thy devotion to the Deity of thy own choice (Ishta-Devata), do not despise other Deities, but honor them all.

¶ As with one gold various ornaments are made, having different forms and names, so one and the same God is worshipped in different countries and ages under different forms and names. Though He may be worshipped in accordance with different conceptions and modes,—some loving to call Him father, others mother, some calling Him friend, others calling Him the beloved, some praying to Him as the inmost treasure of their hearts, calling Him the sweet little child, yet it is one and the same God that is being worshipped in all these relations and modes.

SADHANAS OR PREPARATION TO HIGHER LIFE.

By the late Swami Vivekananda

IF atavism gains, you go down; if evolution gains, you go on. Therefore we must not allow atavism to take place. Here, in my own body, is the first work of the study. We are too busy trying to mend the ways of our neighbors, that is the difficulty. We must begin with our own bodies. The heart, the liver, etc., are all atavistic; bring them back into consciousness, control them, so that they will obey your commands and act up to your wishes. There was a time when we had control of the liver; we could shake the whole skin, as can the cow. I have seen many people bring the control back by sheer hard practice. Once an impress is made it is there. Bring back all the submerged activities—the vast ocean of action. This is the first part of the great study, which is not so necessary for our social well-being. On the other hand, only the consciousness need not be studied all the time.

Then there is the other part of the study, which is not so necessary in our social life, as tending to liberation. Its direct action is to free the soul, to take the torch into the gloom, to clean out what is behind, to shake it up, or even defy it, and to make us march onward piercing the gloom. That is the goal,—the superconscious. Then, when that state is reached, this very man becomes divine, becomes free. And to the mind thus trained to transcend all, gradually this universe will begin to give up its secrets; the book of Nature will be read, chapter after chapter, till the goal is attained, and we pass from this vale of life and death into that One, where death and life

do not exist, and we know the Real and become the Real.

The first thing necessary is a quiet and peaceable life. If I have to go about the world the whole day to make a living, it is hard for me to attain to anything very high in this life. Perhaps in another life I shall be born under more propitious circumstances. But if I am earnest enough, these very circumstances will change even in this birth. Was there anything you did not get which you really wanted? It could not be. For it is the want that creates the body. It is the light that has bored the holes, as it were, in your head, called the eyes. If the light had not existed you would have had no eyes. It is sound that has made the ears. The object of perception existed first, before you made the organ. In a few hundred thousand years, or earlier, we may have other organs to perceive electricity and other things. There is no desire for a peaceful mind. Desire will not come unless there is something outside to fulfil it. The outside something just bores a hole in the body, as it were, and tries to get into the mind. So, when the desire shall arise to have a peaceful, quiet life, where everything shall be propitious for the development of the mind, that *shall* come,—you may take that as my experience. It may come in thousands of lives, but it must come. Hold on to that, the desire. You cannot have the strong desire if its object was not outside for you already. Of course, you must understand, there is a difference in desire and desire. The master said: "My child, if you desire after God, God shall come to you." The disciple did not understand his master fully. One day both went to bathe in a river, and the master said, "Plunge in," and the boy did so. In a moment the master was upon him,

holding him down, He would not let the boy come up. When the boy struggled and was exhausted, he let him go. "Yes, my child, how did you feel there?" "Oh, the desire for a breath of air!" "Do you have that kind of desire for God?" "No sir." "Have that kind of desire for God and you shall have God." That, without which we cannot live, must come to us. If it did not come to us life could not go on.

If you want to be a Yogi, you must be free, and place yourself in circumstances where you are alone and free from all anxiety. He who desires for a comfortable and nice life and at the same time wants to realize the Self is like the fool who, wanting to cross the river, caught hold of a crocodile mistaking it for a log of wood. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Unto him comes everything who does not care for anything. Fortune is like a flirt; she cares not for him who wants her; but she is at the feet of him who does not care for her. Money comes and showers itself upon one who does not care for it; so does fame come in abundance, until it is a trouble and a burden. They always come to the master. The slave never gets anything. The Master is he who can live in spite of them, whose life does not depend upon the little, foolish things of the world. Live for an ideal, and that one ideal alone. Let it be so great, so strong, that there may be nothing else left in the mind; no place for anything else, no time for anything else.

How some people give all their energies, time, brain, body, and everything, to become rich! They have no time for breakfast! Early in the morning they are out,

and at work! They die in the attempt—ninety per cent. of them,—and the rest when they make money cannot enjoy it. That is grand! I do not say it is bad to try to be rich. It is marvellous, wonderful. Why, what does it show? It shows that one can have the same amount of energy and struggle for freedom, as one has for money. We know we have to give up money and all other things when we die, and yet, see the amount of energy we can put forth for them. But we, the same human beings, should we not put forth a thousandfold more strength and energy to acquire that which never fades, but which remains to us forever? For this is the one great friend, our own good deeds, our own spiritual excellence, that follows us beyond the grave. Everything else is left behind here with the body.

That is the one great first step,—the real desire for the ideal. Everything comes easy after that. That, the Indian mind found out; there, in India, men go to any length to find truth. But here, in the West, the difficulty is, that everything is made so easy. It is not truth, but development, that is the great aim. The struggle is the great lesson. Mind you, the great benefit in this life is struggle. It is through that we pass,—if there is any road to Heaven it is through Hell. Through Hell to Heaven is always the way. When the soul has wrestled with circumstance, and has met death, a thousand times death on the way, but nothing daunted has struggled forward again and again and yet again,—then the soul comes out as a giant and laughs at the ideal he has been struggling for, because he finds how much greater is he than the ideal. I am the end, my own self, and nothing else, for what is there to compare to my own self. Can a bag

of gold be the ideal of my soul? Certainly not! My soul is the highest ideal that I have. Realizing my own real nature is the one goal of my life.

There is nothing that is absolutely evil. The devil has a place here as well as God, else he would not be here. Just as I told you, it is through Hell that we pass to Heaven. Our mistakes have places here. Go on! Do not look back if you think you have done something that is not right. Now, do you believe you could be what you are to-day had you not made those mistakes before? Bless your mistakes, then. They have been angels unawares. Blessed be torture! Blessed be happiness! Do not care what be your lot. Hold on to the ideal! March on! Do not look back upon little mistakes and things! In this battlefield of ours, the dust of mistakes must be raised. Those who are so thin-skinned that they cannot bear the dust, let them get out of the ranks.

So, then, this determination to struggle, a hundredfold more determination than that which you put forth to gain anything which belongs to this life, is the first great preparation.

And then along with it there must be meditation. Meditation is the one thing. Meditate! The greatest thing is meditation. It is the nearest approach to spiritual life—the mind meditating. It is the one moment in our daily life that we are not at all material,—the soul thinking of itself, free from all matter,—this marvellous touch of the Soul!

The body is our enemy, and yet is our friend. Which of you can bear the sight of misery? And which of you cannot do so when you see it only as a painting? Because it is unreal, we do not identify ourselves with it;

we know it is only a painting; it cannot bless us, it cannot hurt us. The most terrible misery painted upon a piece of canvas, we may even enjoy; we praise the technique of the artist, we wonder at his marvellous genius, even though the scene he paints is most horrible. That is the secret: that non-attachment. Be the Witness.

No breathing, no physical training of yoga, nothing is any use until you reach to the idea of "I am the Witness." Say, when the tyrant hand is on your neck, "I am the Witness! I am the Witness! Say, I am the Spirit! Nothing external can touch me." When evil thoughts arise, repeat that, give that sledge-hammer blow on their heads, "I am the Spirit! I am the Witness, the Ever-Blessed! I have no reason to do, no reason to suffer, I have finished with everything, I am the Witness. I am in my picture gallery,—this universe is my museum, I am looking at these successive paintings. They are all beautiful, whether good or evil. I see the marvellous skill, but it is all one. Infinite flames of the Great Painter! Really speaking, there is naught,—neither volition, nor desire. He is all. He—She—the Mother is playing and we are like dolls, Her helpers in this play! Here, She puts one in the garb of a beggar, another moment, in the garb of a king, the next moment, in the garb of a saint, and again, in the garb of a devil. We are putting on different garbs, to help the Mother Spirit in Her play!"

When the baby is at play, she would not come even if called by her mother. But when she finishes her play, she would rush to her mother, and would have no nay. So there come moments in our life, when we feel our play is finished, and we want to rush to the Mother. Then all our toil here will be of no value; men, women

and children,—wealth, name and fame,—joys and glories of life, punishments and successes,—will be no more, and the whole life will seem like a show. We shall only see the infinite rhythm going on, endless and purposeless, going, we do not know where. Only this much shall we say: our play is done.

THE WREATH OF GEMS.

By Sri Sankaracharya.

(Note.—A free translation of the thirty-two verses known as 'Maniratnamala.' The dialogue between Guru and disciple forms a rare collection of questions and answers most valuable to those who truly seek to go beyond the plane of birth and death.)

(Concluded from the April Number.)

30. What are fleeting like lightning? Wealth, youth and life. When becomes a gift most plausible? When it is made to a worthy recipient. Even with the last breath, what must not be done and what should be done? Evil deeds; the worship of Shiva (the infinitely blissful Being).

31. What work is pleasing to Him (Shiva) and therefore ought always to be performed in this world? The worship of Vishnu (the enemy of the demon Mura). What is to be contemplated day and night? The non-reality of the world and the unity of one's self with the Lord Who is Bliss Absolute.

32. If memorized or heard with attention, this dialogue, known as "The wreath of gems," is sure to bring joy to the wise, for it proclaims directly the glories of Shiva and Vishnu.

IN THE HOURS OF MEDITATION

THERE are hours when one forgets the world. There are hours when one approaches that region of blessedness in which the soul is Self-contained and in the presence of the Highest. Then is silenced all clamoring of desire; all sound of sense is stilled. Only God IS.

There is no holier sanctuary than a purified mind, a mind concentrated upon God. There is no more sacred place than the region of peace into which the mind enters when it becomes fixed in the Lord. No more sweet-odorous and holy incense is there than the rising of thought unto God.

Purity, bliss, blessedness, peace! Purity, bliss, blessedness, peace! These make up the atmosphere of the state of meditation.

The spiritual consciousness dawns in these silent, sacred hours. The soul is close to its source. The streamlet of personality expands in these hours becoming a mighty, swift-moving river, flowing in the direction of that true and permanent individuality which is the Oceanic Consciousness of God. And this is one and only.

In the hours of meditation the soul draws from On High those true qualifications which are of its nature—fearlessness, the sense of reality, the sense of deathlessness.

Draw within thy Self, O Soul! Seek thou the silent hour with truth. Know thou thy Self to be of the substance of truth, the substance of divinity! Verily within the heart doth God dwell!

Fear not! All mortal things are as shadows. Unreality dominates all appearance. Thou art the reality

within which no change abides. Know thou art the Immoveable One! Let nature play with thee as nature will. Thy form is a dream. Know this, and be thou content! Thy soul is stationed in the formlessness of divinity. Let the mind follow the blinking light; desire rules; limitations exist. Thou art not mind; desire touches thee not. Thou art contained within Omniscience and Omnipotence. Remember life is but a play. Play thy part. Thou must. Such is the law. Yet, withal, thou art neither player, play nor law. Life, itself, cannot limit thee. Art thou not limitless! Life is of the stuff of dreams. Thou dreamest not. Thou art the Dreamless One beyond the touch and taint of unreality. Know this! Know this and be free—free—free!!!

Peace! Peace! Silent—Audible Peace! Peace wherein the Voice of God is heard. Peace and Silence! Then comes the Voice of God, Audible—Audible within the Silence!

"I am with thee, ever and forever. Never hast thou, nor canst thou be from Me apart. I am thy Soul. Verily thy soul is I. Beyond the universe, beyond all dreams I rest, Self-contained within immensity. And even so art thou: aye, even so art thou. For I am thou and thou art I. Leave off all dreams! Come! Come unto Me! I shall carry thee across the ocean of darkness and ignorance unto light and life everlasting. For I am these; and thou and I are One. Thou art I! I am thou! Go dwell in Peace! Dwell thou in Peace! Again when the hour cometh, in the stillness and in the Peace thou shalt hear My Voice!"—the Voice of God—the Voice of God!

—*Prabuddha Bharata.*

Point thy tongue on the anvil of truth.—*Pindar.*

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POWERS OF THE DIVINE MIND.

By the late Swami Trigunatita.

(Continued from the June Number.)



ACCORDING to the Yogis there are different centres in the spinal cord, corresponding to the various plexuses of the sympathetic nervous system. They conceive of these centers as beginning with the *Muladhara*, the basic or sacral plexus, and ending in the *Sahasara*, or thousand-petalled lotus in the brain. The two lower ones we will disregard for the present. The third center is opposite the navel; when that is meditated upon, in a certain way, certain psychic powers will come, by which the interior of the body, the location of the organs, how they work, and anatomy and physiology will be understood. Everything at or below this center belongs to the human plane.

Above that is a center corresponding to the heart. When you meditate on that the heart is developed. That does not mean that the heart will grow larger or function better: it means that the qualities which we associate with the heart will be developed. So long as we are on the earthly, worldly plane, we are on the plane of desires. As soon as we come to the plane opposite the heart, we become more and more unselfish. We learn self-denial. If we want contentment, we let it depend on the contentment of others. By that means we gain such good or divine qualities as piety, faith, recognition

of the Divine Will, submission, surrender of the individual will.

By constant meditation on that nerve center, we cause ourselves to rise still higher, to gain still higher powers, until we come to the next center, which is opposite the throat. By dwelling on that center, we become inspired. Proper inspiration is always due to strong meditation on that center. Then you become qualified to teach, and to give what you have to others.

Still higher is the sixth nerve center, which is between the brows. If we meditate on that from the moral point of view—not moral in the ordinary sense, but in the higher sense—if we dwell on that center from the moral point of view, we get the power by which we can communicate with higher beings. If we meditate from a higher standpoint on that very center, we will get trance, we will get *Samahdi*, when all disturbances, mental, physical, worldly and all, will subside. But that trance is *Savikalpa Samahdi*, meaning that there is a little consciousness of the separateness of the thinker and the thought in view. Still our God is not formless, nameless.

It is very hard to meditate on a formless and nameless, absolute, abstract God. You do not know, you cannot conceive how hard it is. But if you have practiced with patience and perseverance and faithfulness, then you will in time notice that by meditating on a nameless God you are expected to enter into the Absolute region. This means you will no longer have any name or form. If you meditate on a nameless and formless God, you drop your own name and form. So long as you have name and form you cannot form any idea, practically speaking, of the nameless and formless. As soon as you

speak of such a thing as God, certain ideas come to your mind, and these ideas have form.

Our mind is not yet developed; we cannot yet understand subtle ideas of objects. We think, as soon as we give rise to ideas of a nameless and formless God, etc., that we are thinking of God as such; but that is not so. If you could analyse, you would know that that is simply meditating without effect, and is a waste of time. It is better to meditate or to think of a worldly object, because you can be easily drawn towards it, and it can work on the mind better, more than the so-called nameless and formless God. However, when we speak of the human plane and the Divine plane, we are given to understand that we are rising all the time, no matter by what way we go, proper or improper. Sometimes we make mistakes, but even those mistakes produce a good effect, teach a lesson, and there will come a time when we shall make no mistake whatsoever.

When we meditate in a way on that center, we get trance with an object, be it God or anything else. And when we rise still higher, when we can meditate properly, according to the principles formulated in Yoga system, upon the *Sahasara*, the thousand-petalled lotus of the brain, we enter into *Nirvikalpa Samahdi*, from which very few people return to this plane of consciousness. But we need not be afraid; we are not going to lose our consciousness so soon. This body is very material. Even in our spiritual training, we notice that this body bothers us too much, so to say.

What is it—this body of which we complain so much? We are speaking of spiritual persons. Ordinary persons never complain of this body: to them this body is always good, no matter how bad it may be.

There are five sheathes to this body, one within the other. Until you enter into the innermost, you cannot find out the truth about the human body, its construction, and the function of the mind and all that. We have just dwelt on the nerve centers; now we are going by way of another path which is higher than these nerve centers. First, we notice that this body is made of nothing but material substance, food, generally speaking. If you do not eat, this body will not thrive—unless you be a Yogin. By supernatural power the body may be kept, but not otherwise. Generally speaking, food is the main substance of this body, and forms the most superficial, external sheath, the shell of ourself, the *Annamaya kōsha*. *Kōsha* means sheath. Just as you shell peas, so can you analyse your individual self, *i. e.*, do the work of shelling, unsheathing yourself. First is this external body; and next, if you analyse further, you enter into the *Pranamaya kōsha*. This consists of the five pranas, five airs within this body, including respiration, and the five instruments of work, hands and feet, etc.,—the five kinds of bodily instruments. When you analyse more—when can you analyse all these shells? When you have done the nerve meditations. Before these nerve meditations, you will have to meditate according to general instructions.

When you enter into the third inner shell, the *Manomaya kōsha*, meaning the mind and the five senses of knowledge, you enter into the mental world. We speak against the senses, but the senses are, at the same time, the doors of knowledge. Through them comes knowledge—experience. The mind is the main factor in giving rise to all kinds of desires, be they worldly or spiritual desires, aspirations, ambitions, etc. And those

desires are fulfilled through, or with the help, or by the senses. So mind plus the senses makes the third inner shell. The fourth is the *Vijnanamayaśośha*, meaning the shell from which we get the sum total of knowledge. How? Through the *Buddhi* and the five senses. The same doors of knowledge are yet kept open, the same senses that were in the three other shells, plus the *Buddhi*, make the fourth.

We are going inside more and more, from the human plane to the Divine. *Buddhi* means the determinative faculty. The nature of the mind is questioning, doubting, not being able to settle this or that. Sometimes we say this, next time we say that. When the mind is developed, it becomes *Buddhi*, a higher form, which determines,—yes, this, not anything else. When *Buddhi* rules, it commands the senses, the doors of knowledge. The doors of knowledge will not let wrong belief enter.

Now we are near the edge of the human plane and going towards the Divine. The fifth sheath is *Anandamayāśośha*, *ananda* meaning bliss, peace. When you arrive at that, you do not find any such faculty as body or mind, etc. Simply you notice that you are yet covered with ignorance, the sheet of ignorance. You understand that nature has put that sheath over you. That is *Anandamayāśośha*. Now we are about to jump into another region,—to leave this forever. When we have for certain come to the decisive conclusion that these things, these shells are not good for us, when we have finished all the experiences that we had to go through, when we shall be perfectly satisfied, then we will try to leave this external world, and this world of the body, the mind, the senses, and all these planes. All these planes

are in this body. The mind alone is the great creator. We are rising from higher to still higher planes by spiritual culture, by analysis, etc. No need of believing in any dogmas or doctrines; analysis of your own actions, your own mind, your own body, is enough. You need not go to anybody. So long as you are on the human plane, you need education, you need experience, etc.

So long as you are on the human plane you need the help of a teacher, of a friend, of the Scripture, etc. But as soon as you go to the Divine plane, you do not need any such thing. Rather you can create something of that nature of your own. When you get to that last plane of *Anandamayakosha*, you simply try to get rid of ignorance. Other things have already been dropped by you. The desires have dropped from the mental plane. Mind was the creator of all desires, and mind is the creator of the world. You will understand, when you go to sleep and dream, no world exists before you. You cannot create anything, but the mind creates. Your philosophy may say that when you dream you give rise to some thoughts of forms that you saw in your wakeful state in the world, so the mind is not the absolute creator, but has just borrowed the ideas from the existing world outside, the external world. Yes, it does. But that very mind, if you analyse more, you will find is really the creator of this external world, and you will understand when you can analyse properly.

When can you analyse properly? When you pass through the spiritual culture practices, nerve meditations and analysis of these shells, then you can understand whether the mind is the creator or whether somebody else created the mind. Who created the mind? Mind is the creator, but who is the father of my father?

When we arrive at that fifth sheath, we try to get rid of the influence of nature, and when we go beyond all these shells, all these planes, then it is that we arrive at the really Divine state.

"The Powers of the Divine Mind": now it is easy to understand what that means. The powers of the Divine Mind means the powers that are necessary for us to arrive at the Divine plane. The powers of the Divine Mind are not like the powers of the human mind. They are the powers of the mind that lead us to the Divine plane. Any kind of power can be produced by the human mind, as we said the other day. You can walk in the air, in the water; you can communicate with higher beings; you can go to the sun, to the moon; you can be invisible; you can give up your body and enter into another body and come back to the former body; you can raise the dead; you can cure the sick and you can do anything. Those are the powers of the human mind, not the Divine. These are the powers that are relative, not absolute. We spoke of discontentment. On the human plane the desires are never satisfied. On the other hand, take the spiritual side of that question, discontentment. It tells you,—do not be satisfied with this present condition; if you are, you will become attached to it. If you want more, it is better. When you want more and do not get it, that is one kind of discontentment; and when you get more and still want more, that is another kind of discontentment. We are speaking of the latter kind.

We practice discontentment in our spiritual life—"Neti, neti," not this, not this—the motto that you have heard so often in Vedanta Philosophy. Never be satis-

fied with present conditions if you want to rise higher. If you want to stay where you are forever, be satisfied,—try to be satisfied, console yourself. But we know that you will not be satisfied for long. No matter how much you say that you do not want more, you will want more in some form or other. You say, "not this, not this, not this world nor that world, not this heaven nor that heaven." Then you go beyond the region of heaven and hell. And what do you get there? Do you mean to say that we are going to lose our individuality? You may or may not lose your individuality. Individuality may not be lost, if you attain that state in this very life. We call it *Jivan Mukti*—spiritual freedom, absolute freedom while alive.

If you attain *Savikalpa Samadhi*, you will be free. And then, keeping that motto, "not this not this" try to reach *Nirvaṇa Samadhi*. There what will you do? Are you going to lose your individuality or to retain it? Both,—either this or that or both, any way you can take; it will not be in any way contradictory. If you lose your individuality, you will lose it in your own individuality. You will be lost in your own self. You are not going to lose yourself, but to keep it, to retain it; that is not losing. And if you take the other meaning,—yes, you lose altogether this mind, this world, these friends, these relatives, this sense of duty, etc. But all these things have a natural tendency to terminate that way. You cannot help it. No matter how careful you are not to meditate, lest you lose yourself, some force, some power will compel you to meditate. You will be put into such circumstances by the force of nature that you cannot help meditating. The mind will rise higher and higher until you lose your-

self in that Absolute Self. That is not losing one's own individuality, but arriving at that individuality, if you call it so, which is everlasting. Now we are individualized in so many ways. One person is called so and so, meaning that he looks like this and that, because others look like this and that. This person is named this and that, because others are named this and that. Where is your individuality? You speak of your own individuality: your own individuality means so many other individualities. When these individualities are reduced to *one*, that is not loss of individuality, but discovery of one essence, one substance, one individuality, one entity, behind all these different individualities.

That is, rather, arriving at the highest truth, the highest Self of your own. God came to His own, but His own did not know Him, did not expect Him, the Bible says. We are nothing but Divine, but we do not know it. How can you lose your individuality? Individuality is there, if you call it so, in that Absolute form for us. We are simply to discover it. You know the meaning of the word "discover"? Making that which already exists visible or known to us. That is discovery.

We are going through so many experiences to know, to know. We are not conscious, we are not aware of our actions, of the method, the way by which nature guides us. Her ways of guidance are hidden. There will come a time, no matter whether you want it or not, there *will* come a time when you will know that truth that you are that one Self. That is by *Nirvākālpā Samādhi*: when you attain that you will become the Absolute, and you will not come back.

There are some people who enjoy *Jivan Mukti*, the

state of freedom while alive, who understand what they themselves are, that their own self is neither body nor mind, neither the world nor this and that, etc. They, being in their own body and still living, are without the body. They, being in the midst of all kinds of sufferings, are above them. They suffer so much, still in the midst of sufferings they retain peace and happiness in their minds. That is the power of the Divine mind. Such a person, even if he be thrown into the midst of the fathomless sea of work (many persons are against work, but the wise do not say so; the middle class of people misunderstand), in the midst of work he will be without work. He is, as a matter of fact, without work; he is not affected by the effect, good or bad, of his work. If he is thrown into the midst of all kinds of enjoyments, he does not get attached to them. He can withdraw himself in a moment from those enjoyments, because he enjoys without the kind of motive which easily causes an attachment to the world.

Those are the powers of the Divine mind. This human mind, when it arrives at that Divine state, gets the power by which the person can separate himself from his body, from the mind, from the world. Such a person can do the greatest kind of good to the world.

The Self which is free from sin, free from old age, from death and grief, from hunger and thirst, which desires nothing but what it ought to desire, and imagines nothing but what it ought to imagine, that it is which we must search out, that it is which we must understand. He who has searched out that Self and understands it, obtains all worlds and all desires.—*Chandogya Upanishad*.

SAYINGS OF ŚRĪ RĀMAKṚISHṆA

¶ His name is Intelligence (Chinmaya). His abode is Intelligence, and He, the Lord, is All-intelligence.

¶ Q. What is the nature of Brahman (God)? A. The Brahman is without attributes, unchangeable, immovable, and firm like Mount Meru.

¶ So long as the sound of a bell is audible, it exists in the region of form; but when it is no longer heard, it has become formless. Similarly God is both with form and formless.

¶ Fire itself has no definite shape, but in glowing embers it assumes certain forms. The formless fire is then endowed with forms. Similarly the formless God sometimes invests Himself with definite forms.

¶ God is absolute eternal Brahman as well as the Father of the Universe. The indivisible Brahman, pure Existence, Intelligence and Bliss, is like a vast, shoreless ocean without bounds and limits in which I can only struggle and sink, but when I approach the always sportive Personal Deity, *Hari*, I get peace like the sinking man who finds the shore.

¶ As water when congealed becomes ice, so the visible form of the Almighty is the condensed manifestation of the All-pervading formless Brahman. It may be called, in fact, Sat-chit-ānanda solidified. As ice is part and parcel of water, remains in water and afterwards melts in it; so the Personal God is part and parcel of the Impersonal. He rises from the Impersonal, remains there, and ultimately merges into it and disappears.

THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

ITS HISTORIC IMPORTANCE.

ENTERING into a survey of the mystical consciousness as it has been manifested throughout the history of mankind, we find that the religious experience has been an essential phenomenon in human progress and affairs. Religious ideas have ruled the world and have caused the rise and fall of tides upon tides of emotion. History reveals the coming and going of many empires according to the origin or modification of the religious outlook. India is one continuous evidence, the Asokan Empire being one of its highest testimonials to the import of religious culture. Mohammedanism and Christianity loom up respectively against the historic background of the empires of the Caliph Omar and Constantine the Great. The great "heresy" of Arianism in the making of early Christianity and the "Protestant Reformation" in a later period of Christian civilization attest to the unimaginably powerful influence of religious ideas upon human affairs. And all these and many other historic movements, too numerous to be mentioned, in connection with the development of religious belief, are unimpeachable witnesses to the significant place religion holds amongst the moulding influences on human destiny and events. Even to-day there are movements where noteworthy religious import attest to the profound influence of the spiritual impulse and vision upon mankind.

From an historic view-point, then, religion has been continuously demonstrating its practicability and essentially valuable contribution to human experience. For

religion, be it well remembered, is *not only* theology: it is a tidal-wave-impulse, entering into each and every function of human faculty as the latter expresses itself in the drama of human events and in the theatre of human life. For art and song and literature and philosophy are inseparably associated with the religious vision; and in the vanguard or in the wake, as the case may be, of conquest and commerce, and in the intellectual and moral exchange of ideals between the nations of the earth, one finds that religion, both as an intellectual and social-moral power, is ubiquitously evident. To the student of comparative theology or the student of philology the influence of one religious system upon another is peculiarly patent. He sees Hinduism as the mother of Buddhism, and Buddhism, in turn, through the Alexandrian philosophical schools, as the mother of Christianity. He notices the assimilating properties of Christianity in its appropriation of many of the rites and symbols of Egyptian, Assyrian, Judaic and Roman religious idealism. And he becomes aware, also, of the social aspects of religion, both in the Orient and the Occident, in determining historic happenings and in introducing new modes of manners and mannerisms amongst the various empires of the world. One need only refer to the structures of Egyptian, Roman and Hindu society in this connection; in this connection one need mention only the Mohammedan conquests of the Eastern Empire of the Romans and the doubtful conquests of the Christian crusades, when, in both instances, Europe and Asia met and intermingled in all conceivable forms of human contact. So many geographical discoveries and colonizing enterprises are inseparably blended with the religious

temperament. The discovery of the Western world and the many minute discoveries upon the American continent, the settlement of Java and Ceylon and Siam by Buddhist devotees were all carried out under religious patronage.

One thus comprehends the worthiness and the workableness of the religious life. One thus sees that behind the higher forms of human endeavor, from the most ancient to the most modern times, there has been a great visualising and motive power, acting, directly or indirectly, as the religious spirit. The great temple at Madura and the Vatican at Rome, the temples of ancient Greece and of the ancient Oriental nations, as well as the mediæval and modern cathedrals of Europe, the statue of Buddha and the far-famed masterpieces of Ajanta in India and of Raphaël and Michael Angelo in Europe, the stained glass windows of European cathedrals and the exquisite carvings on Indian and Assyrian temples, the masses of Mozart and the Indian *Jatras*, the Justinian code and the Edicts of Asoka, the missionary enterprises of the world-wandering Buddhist monks and of other great missionaries, carrying their culture with them, whithersoever they went,—all these are direct tributes to humanity of the religious experience. In this new synthesis the great religious masters must be regarded, verily, as the patrons and the saviors of humanity, initiating as they do a new spirit which, though in one sense perhaps exclusively religious, nevertheless vitalizes and renders dynamic and multiplies in various ways the higher aspirations of man.

Religion, in its broadest sense, is righteousness, that which in India is spoken of as Dharma. It is that which

increases the vision of humanity and renders permanent, through the moral demands that it makes, the best elements in all human experience. It is the single impulse of the Spirit working itself manifoldly accordingly as it is appropriated by the variously-minded of the leaders of men. This explains why behind the thrones of Asoka and of Omar and of Constantine, loom higher than the thrones themselves the Master-Figures of the Buddha and the Prophet and the Christ; this explains, also, how behind the noble activities associated with the decline of worn-out-by-luxury empires and the rise and growth of spirited nations—always—in the sublime distance, untarnished by the details of events, stand the souls of those who have known the Beatific Vision.—*Prabuddha Bharata*.

The thing we want
Is hearts that rise above Earth's worries,
Like the Sun at morn, rising above the clouds,
Splendid and strong.

I stand at morn
And view the smoke, curling above the roofs,
In greater volume, and thereby I know
The age is one of growing energy.

O man, look up, even in the hour of weal,
When Progress leads the nation, and revere
The grace of God that watches o'er the Earth.

No need to bear
Grudge against heaven, or wreak one's spiteful spleen
Against one's fellow-men when one reflects
On his own errors.

The heart which thinks
That all is well and, therefore, lets itself
Relax its guard, doth stand in jeopardy
More than the man who fights at mortal grips
Facing his bitterest foes.

—*By the late Emperor of Japan.*

WORK IS WORSHIP.

By Swami Vivekananda

THE highest man *cannot* work, for there is no binding element, no attachment, no ignorance in him. A ship is said to have passed over a mountain of magnet ore, and all the bolts and bars were drawn out, and it went to pieces. It is in ignorance that struggle remains, because we are all really atheists. We do not see God or believe in Him. He is G-O-D to us, and nothing more. There are moments when we think He is near, but then we fall down again. When you see Him, who struggles for whom? Help the Lord! There is a proverb in our language, "Shall we teach the Architect of the universe how to build?" All the work you do is subjective, is done for your own benefit. God has not fallen into a ditch for you or me to help Him out, by building a hospital or something of that sort. He *allows* you to work. He allows you to exercise your muscles in this great gymnasium, not in order to help Him but that you may help yourself. Do you think even an ant will die for want of your help? Most arrant blasphemy! The world does not need you at all. The world goes on, you are like a drop in this ocean. A leaf does not move, the wind does not blow without Him. Blessed are we that we are given the privilege of working for Him, not of helping Him. Cut out this word "help" from your mind. You cannot help; it is blaspheming. You are here yourself at His pleasure. Do you mean to say, you help Him? You worship. He is all and in all. We are allowed to worship Him. Stand in that reverent attitude to the whole universe, and then will come perfect non-attachment. This should be your duty. This is the proper attitude of work. This is the secret taught by Karma Yoga.

IN THE HOURS OF MEDITATION

AGAIN the hour is at hand. Day merges into the evening time. Everywhere without is quiet. Nature herself is at peace. And when nature is at peace, more peacefully does the soul retire into the inner chamber of the heart. More readily also. Let the senses and their activity subside. Life, as it is, is short; desire is rampant. Give at least some short time unto the Lord. He asketh little, only this, that thou shalt know thy Self; for verily, knowing thy Self, thou comest to know Him. For God and the Soul are One. Some say, "Remember, O Man, that thou art dust!" True, of the body! Even of the mind is it true! But the higher, the mightier, the truer, the holier revelation reads, "Remember, O Man, that thou art Soul!"

"Indestructible and imperishable art thou alone, O Soul!" So speaketh the Lord. All else wanes. However mighty the form, it perishes. Death and destruction are the lot of all form. Thought is subordinate to change. Personality is of the weaving of these—thought and form. Therefore, stand aside, O Soul. Remember thou art the Self beyond both thought and form. All virtue resides in this consciousness, "Thou art One with God." In this alone art thou immortal; in this alone art thou pure and holy.

Try not to *become* the master. Thou *art* the master! There is no becoming for thee. Thou *art*, O soul! However sublime may seem "the process of becoming," the hour shall come when thou shalt know, "Progress is in time" but "Perfection is within eternity." And thou art not of time. Thou art of eternity.

Is there divinity! Then, "Tat Tvam Asi!" meaning "Thou art That! Thou art That!" Understand that which is the Highest within thee. Worship the Highest! And the most perfect form of worship is the knowledge that thou and the Highest art One. And what is the Highest? That, O Soul, thou callest God.

Throw all dreams into oblivion! Having heard of the Self within thee, the Self thou art, understand! Having understood, perceive! Having perceived, know! Having known, realize! Having realized, then—"Tat Tvam Asi!" which is "Thou art That!"

Retreat from the world! It is the embodiment of dreams. It, together with the body,—verily, these are the nests of dreams. Shalt thou be a dreamer! Shalt thou be bound forever in the bondage of dreams! "Arise! Awake, and stop not till the goal is reached!"

So speaketh the Lord in the silence—in the deep, deep Silence when only His Voice is audible. Hari! Om Tat Sat! "Go thou in Peace!" Beyond all, aye, even within all appearance of form reigns the Spirit. Its nature is Peace, Peace, Unutterable Peace!

—*Prabuddha Bharata.*

Vedanta is the philosophy of philosophies, the religion of religions, the science of sciences. It is the end and aim of all these; it is the very terminus of everything. Nay, it is beyond them all. Vedanta is composed of two Sanskrit words, *Veda* and *Anta*. *Veda* is derived from the Sanskrit root *VID*, to know; *Veda* means knowledge, and *Anta* means the end or goal of all wisdom—the finality of all things—the great conclusion of all departments of knowledge. Vedanta leads any person to the realization of the great, Ultimate, Absolute Truth.—*Swami Trigunatita.*

BOOK REVIEWS

FOOTFALLS OF INDIAN HISTORY, by Sister Nivedita. Longmans, Green & Co., 8 Paternoster Row, London. 4th Ave. & 30th St., New York. Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras. 1915.

The history of any nation cannot be faithfully presented from one standpoint alone. All the evidence obtainable from various sources, such as archæological remains, literature and folk lore, the testimony of travellers, etc., must be sifted so that the resulting composite picture may present with more or less fidelity a reproduction of the times, and the peoples, with their aims and ideals.

In this book, the last which the late Sister Nivedita wrote, she endeavors from an almost purely archæological standpoint, to trace the rise and growth respectively of Buddhism, Hinduism and Vaishnavism, with their resultant influence on ancient Indian art. The first half of the book is devoted to the study of the remains of the cities of Buddhism, and the ancient abbey of Ajanta, with their wealth of material so valuable to the archæologist.

The latter half is mainly concerned with a consideration of "that synthesis of Hinduism, the caves of Elephanta," and the rise of Vaishnavism under the Guptas. There are many interesting plates illustrative of the text, six of them being colored reproductions of water colors and drawing by Gaganendra Nath Tagore, Abaninda Nath Tagore and Nanda Lal Bose.

The unusual opportunities which the Sister Nivedita enjoyed through the sponsorship of her Guru, the late Swami Vivekananda, to study at first hand the religious, social and political conditions of *modern* India, together with the loving care and profound knowledge which she brought to her subject, gave her a depth of sympathy and a breadth of outlook, which enabled her to portray and vivify for us the times and peoples of *ancient* India into glowing realities.

To one with some knowledge of archæology and the desire to know more about India and her development, and the leisure to visit the places and see the inscriptions for himself, it would make an ideal guide book. To those less fortunate who must remain at home, there is much to interest and stimulate to further study.

GREAT SAVIORS OF THE WORLD. Vol. 1. By Swami Abhedananda. Author of "Self-Knowledge," "Divine Heritage of Man," "India and Her People," "How to be a Yogi," etc. Published by The Vedanta Society, 135 West 80th Street, New York.

In this age people are beginning to outgrow the limitations of sects and creeds, to see the unity lying beneath their diversity. They have come to know that the realization of oneness with the Eternal is not a monopoly of any religion, race or time; that if they do not recognize divinity in the saviors and prophets of other nations, it is because they have not seen the divinity in their own.

This little book, in which the Swami Abhedananda tells of the life and teachings of Krishna, Zoroaster, and Lao-Tze, is the first of three volumes consisting of lectures delivered before the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences. The author shows, by very happily chosen excerpts from their different scriptures, that though the methods of attainment differ, fundamentally the message delivered by all is the same: that religion is neither talk nor theory, but realization in our heart of hearts that—"I am a spirit in relation with the Universal Spirit and all its great manifestations," that "God is in every person—working through all hands, walking through all feet and eating through every mouth."

These volumes will be invaluable to those especially, who are interested in the study of comparative religions, but who have not the time to work out their differences and similarities for themselves. The two volumes to follow will contain the life and teachings of Buddha, Christ, Mohamet and Sri Ramakrishna.

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No. 5

MAN'S CONDITION AFTER DEATH.

By the late Swami Trigunatita.



WHAT is man's condition in this present life? We, one and all, should know that, at least. If we know the present condition, it necessarily follows that we will know the past and future as well. Why? Because the present state is the cause of the future and the effect of the past. So, having known one, we can know the other. Although it is very hard to know man's condition after death, to know the future, at the same time it is very easy if we simply know the present condition. What is the present condition of man? You may say either good or bad, spiritual or worldly, happy or miserable. So will be his future. If you are now in bondage, in the future you will be in the same bondage. If you realize that you are free in this present life, you will be free when you pass out. You will reap as you sow.

Now, at the same time, if it is very hard to know the past and the future, we might say that it is harder still to know the present condition. Why? Because we are so ignorant, so blindfolded, about our present state, why and what our actions are, what our relation is to the world, and what is our duty, etc. As we will know the whole chain if we know thoroughly one of its links, so if we know the meaning of any one of our daily actions,

we shall know the whole chain of life—know not only the present, past and future, from time immemorial in the beginning to the infinite, but everything, not only of life, but of the whole creation, and of God. We will be all-knowing. So, from another point of view, it is not so hard to know man's condition after death.

Once Sri Krishna asked his best disciple, Yudhishtira, the oldest brother of Arjuna, "What is the most wonderful thing in the world?" The disciple replied, "Though man has seen so many people dying, he never thinks that death will happen to himself as well as to the rest of humanity." Death is a most wonderful thing. Birth is not as wonderful, from the standpoint of phenomena, as death. Having lived a conscious, intelligent life for many years, we pass out without letting our friends, or the world, know where we are going.

Several of our brethren, who were great Vedantists, promised, if they died before us, to come back and tell us what had happened. But, in spite of their promise, they did not return. Then is it impossible for us to know the condition after death? In a way it is impossible. But on the other hand it is very possible to know. You may argue that a tree is produced from the seed and the seed from the tree. So the tree and the seed are bound by the law of causation. One is the cause and the other is the effect, and vice versa. You may say one particular seed may not produce any tree. That seed, although it is the effect of the tree, may not produce any further effect itself, may not be the cause of a future tree—that it may be the last of its kind in the chain of causation. So a man, although he is born (now birth is the cause of death; where there is birth there must be death)—all

men must die sooner or later, so that death will be the effect of birth; because a man is born he must die, but that death may not produce again another birth, as one particular seed may not produce a future tree. That may be a good argument but if you look very minutely, if you argue very closely, you will find that birth and death are related by the chain of causation. Neither of those two, birth and death, will be stopped at any particular place. They must be continued to eternity. Seed, tree, seed,—that tree must produce a tree if it be in certain circumstances, certain conditions. You may destroy the certain conditions, but so long as the seed has all its virtues of producing a tree, that seed must produce a tree when rightly placed. So death, man's death, mortal being's death, must produce birth, and must follow birth. Birth, death, birth, death, all in a continued chain. There was no beginning, there will be no end of birth, death, birth, death.

Then if that be so, that we have to run to eternity, why should we be spiritual? All men might be willful and do whatever they like. But we observe our rules of morality, society, etc. You know why? Not merely from the sense of duty—very few have that strong sense of duty—but from fear. Out of fear conscience will criticize you first, ninety-nine per cent. of the people or the law of the country will criticize you, or your parents, guardians, relatives, will criticize you and you will suffer. Those who do perform all their acts of life from a pure sense of duty are free souls.

There is such a thing as preventing a seed from producing a tree, even in the proper environments and under favorable conditions—for instance, if the seed be

burned or scorched. Then, although it may retain its shape, it will not produce a tree. So, certain men may not be subject to future birth even though they pass out of their bodies. Their death will be the last in their manifestation on earth or in creation.

Now, we understand by the theory of evolution, that this life will again produce future lives, just as we have raised our condition from lower to this, and as, in the future, we will rise from this condition to a higher one. Then how can eternal hell or eternal heaven be possible? There can be no such thing as eternal heaven or eternal hell. If after death we go to heaven, we shall carry our body—may not be this physical body, material body—but the subtle, finer body, astral body. You will go to heaven with that body, because you will have to arise, to resurrect. So you will have to carry your body. You go to heaven, and there you will have to live. Living means work. You cannot live without work of some kind or other. And work may be good or bad. Where there is work there must be the idea of good and bad in connection with that work. Work cannot be absolutely pure. It must be either good or bad. Purity does not mean good. Purity means without object, quality, or condition, and is devoid of both good and bad. That is purity: logically, scientifically speaking. If you call good, pure, then you make a mistake. Good exists in relation to bad. Where there is good there must be some idea of bad. Those are relative words. So if the idea of pure depends on good or bad, it cannot be absolutely pure. And where there is work, there must be good or bad.

Purity means absolute bliss, absolute peace, absolute

happiness. Man is made of that purity. The essence of purity is in man. Man's condition after death should be like that—should reflect what he is now. Here we may use eternal heaven or eternal hell, in a figurative sense, because we would exaggerate a little in order to impress your minds. That is our habit, our nature, our custom. But to lead you to understand, or to believe, that there is eternal hell or eternal heaven where we can go and live very happily or miserably, from another point of view, would be altogether wrong. The term eternal is something which is absolute, and cannot be used with reference to relative things or objects. Hell and heaven are relative. Where there is hell there must be heaven. If you cannot act, cannot work, cannot live properly, you will go to hell. If you do good, you will go to heaven. All relative, depending on either this or that, hence cannot be absolute, cannot be eternal.

Why do we speak of the absolute and eternal and relative, etc.? Because all our misery depends on the idea of relativity. If we can give up all our ideas of the relative world, then we can be free and happy. That is the ideal, to give up all ideas of relativity. Eternal, infinite, and absolute, are terms that are beyond this relative sphere, beyond the jurisdiction of happiness and misery. If you be born, you will have to die. If you die, there is every chance of being born again. If you be rich to-day, you may be poor tomorrow. And so the wheel turns.

So happiness and misery, hell and heaven, all are relative terms. You cannot rely on them. If you read the Indian scriptures, you will find that the Hindus also believe in heaven and hell and spirits, etc., but they know

that heaven is a relative place, so that if you go to heaven and you do not perform higher works there, to raise your level still higher, you will have to come again to this earth. And again, on this earth, if you do not behave properly, you will have to go still further back.

Now, man's condition after death is a very serious question. When a person dies, what happens? The nervous impulses stop; the circulation of the blood stops; the respiration stops. What is the meaning of that word death? Merely stating that there is no circulation, no respiration, no nervous current, no electricity, no life, is no answer. Even doctors do not understand what happens when a person dies. The same person is lying before you, the same flesh, the same eyes, the same appearance. But it does not speak, it does not hear, it does not move. You lament over the death. But think what happens, what is the meaning of that death?

There are three parts to our question. That man lived a life on earth with you. What is the meaning of that life? That life means so many works, a big account-book of debit and credit. Account-books are very important, are to be regarded and preserved and kept carefully. For nature is uniform everywhere. We have borrowed from nature. So many works are done, who did them? That poor man who is lying down did so many works, but that man doesn't work any more. Who did those works? Not that person, not Mr. Johnson, who died. Say the senses, the mind, the intellect. Some one will come and tell you that the mind, the senses, the intellect, are all produced by chemical processes, for they are connected with the respiration, circulation, and the nervous system. They work together in the body through

the senses with the mind. The brain is there but does not work any more. All the nerves are there, but they do not work any more. You apply any amount of electricity it will have no effect. You compare yourself with that body that is lying there: you work with the brain, with the senses, etc. Who works? Will you say that the brain works? No, you will say, "I work, I do, I feel, I am happy." That I is behind all these senses, mind, brain, and the like. That I is called the Self, the Soul, the Spirit. We call it, scientifically, or philosophically rather, the individual Self. By individual self we apply some differentiation to the self. The absolute self within, which is all-pervading, when it seems to be in bondage, we call the individual self. Like the bubble on the ocean, which is nothing but ocean, part and parcel of it, but still when it has form, we name it bubble. So the Self—that all-pervading Self—when it takes form, receives the name, "man." Now that individual self passes out, taking possession of the account-book of work that the person did. What did that account-book contain? Work. What is the meaning of that? Work here means nothing material, nothing that you can see, but the impressions produced by work.

You will find that in early childhood you might have done something which you have forgotten, but suddenly it comes to your mind. Where does it come from? You did that act, or you were connected with that act. That means that you made an impression on your mind, and that impression can never be effaced, but will remain so long as you do not free yourself. That impression comes up to the surface sometimes when circumstances are favorable. So when a person dies he carries with him

these impressions. Here person does not mean physical person. "He passes out" doesn't mean that the physical person passes out. "He" means the individual self. The individual self passes out, carrying with him the impressions of the works that he did.

Now that is the meaning of death; that is what happens when death occurs. You may not know, that dying man cannot tell you. How can he tell? He left behind the instrument, the tool, the organ of speech: he cannot speak. When a tool is blunt, a carpenter cannot work; he has to buy a new one. So the dead man cannot come back to tell you the story, because his external senses were blunt, useless. Those impressions with their leader—the individual self—will have to live another life. As a matter of fact, the individual self is nothing but the collection of those impressions. The real self has no births, no deaths, and all these births and deaths are but phenomena.

The astral body cannot stay without the material body. You know certain spirits suffer much; they suffer because they cannot find the proper body, or because they have done something in their previous life for which they are bound to suffer now. When a person takes a fresh, new body, if he performs good works or better works, he goes to higher plane, etc. But if a person does wrong works, when he passes out he goes to lower regions. The impressions carry him there.

But there is another life, another kind of life. If, by spiritual practices, you separate the soul, which is ever free, infinite and eternal, which never dies, and never is born, from the external, physical body, you will rise above the law of birth and death, the law of causation.

That is the best kind of death and man's condition after death should be like that.

There are certain other questions. When a man dies accidentally, what happens? He may go to a higher plane, may be born on this earth, or may go to lower regions, according to the work he has done. A suicide may not necessarily have to go to the spirit region. That depends on his works. No matter how a man dies, the works of his whole life will lead him, will mould his future. Certain persons are very much afraid of death. That fear is not so bad as to be too confident in your present life, to be too worldly, to be engaged too much in worldly affairs. It is better to be afraid of death, because in that case you may work to improve your present condition; you may do better work so that your death may be better and after death you may go to a better place. That is the reason for such theories as eternal hell and eternal heaven,—so that you may be very much afraid of death and take the utmost care of your present life.

What is it to die? If we view it in itself, and stripped of those imaginary terrors in which our fears have dressed it, we shall find it to be nothing more than the mere work of Nature; but it is childish folly to be afraid of what is natural. Nay, it is not only the work of Nature, but is conducive to the good of the universe, which subsists by change. Do not despise death, but accept it willingly; look upon it as part of the conduct of Nature, and one of those things which Providence has been pleased to order. For such as are youth and age, growth and manhood, and all natural actions and incidents of life, so also is dying. He must look upon death as Nature's business, and wait her leisure, as he does for the progress and maturity of other things.—*Marcus Aurelius*.

SAYINGS OF SRĪ RÂMAKRISHŪA

¶ The Lord can pass an elephant through the eye of a needle. He can do whatever he likes.

¶ The God with form is visible, nay, we can touch Him face to face, as with one's dearest friend.

¶ At a certain stage of his path of devotion the devotee finds satisfaction in God with form; at another stage, in God without form.

¶ God is formless and God is with form too, and He is that which transcends both form and formlessness. He alone can say what else He is.

¶ The sun is many times larger than the earth but distance makes it look like a very small disk; so the Lord is infinitely great, but being too far away from Him we fail to comprehend His real greatness.

¶ Q. What is the relation between Mâyâ and Brahman?
A. Mâyâ may be compared to a snake that is active and moving, while Brahman is like the snake absolutely still. Mâyâ is the name of the manifested powers of the Absolute and Immoveable Reality which is called Brahman.

¶ As the same fish is dressed into soup, curry, or cutlet, and each has his own choice dish of it, so the Lord of the Universe, though One, manifests Himself differently according to the different likings of His worshippers, and each one of these has his own view of God which he values the most. To some He is a kind master or a loving father, a sweet smiling mother or a devoted friend, and to others a faithful husband or a dutiful and obliging son.

THE MAHABHARATA AND THE RAMAYANA IN BRIEF.

By the Vedanta Society of New York in charge of Swami Bodhananda.

ANCIENT India, like ancient Greece, boasts of two great Epics. The Mahabharata, based on the legends and traditions of a great historical war, is the Iliad of India. The Ramayana, describing the wanderings and adventures of a prince banished from his country, has so far something in common with the Odyssey.

Among the many cultured races that flourished in northern India about a thousand years before Christ, the Kosalas of Oudh, and the Videhas of North Behar were perhaps the most cultured. Their monarchs were famed for their learning, as well as for their prowess. Their priests distinguished themselves by founding schools of learning, which were known all over India. Their celebrated universities (parishads) were frequented by students from surrounding countries. Their compilations of the Vedic hymns were used in various parts of India. Their elaborate Brahmanas or commentaries on the Vedas were handed down from generation to generation by priestly families. Their researches into the mysteries of the soul and into the nature of the One Universal Soul, which pervades the creation, are still preserved in the ancient Upanishads, and are among the most valuable heritages which have been left to us by the ancients. And their researches and discoveries in science and philosophy gave them the foremost place among the gifted races of ancient India.

To the imagination of the poet, the age of the Kosalas and Videhas was associated with all that is great and glorious, all that is righteous and true. His description

of Ayodhya, the capital town of the Kosalas, is a description of an ideal seat of righteousness. Darasatha, the king of the Kosalas, is an ideal king, laboring for the good of a loyal people. Rama, the eldest son of Darasatha and the hero of the Epic, is an ideal prince, brave and accomplished, devoted to his duty, unflattering in his truth. The king of the Videhas, Janaka, is a monarch and a saint. Sita, the daughter of Janaka and the heroine of the Epic, is the ideal of a faithful woman and a devoted wife. The virtues of Rama and the faithfulness of Sita were described again and again in added lines and cantos. The loving devotion of Rama's brothers, the sanctity of saints, and the peacefulness of the hermitages visited by Rama, were described with endless reiteration.

We are informed that the poem consists of six books and a supplement book (Uttara Kunda); and that it comprises five hundred cantos and twenty-four thousand couplets.

The characters of the Mahabharata are characters of flesh and blood with the virtues and crimes of great actors in the historic world; the characters of the Ramayana are more often the ideals of manly devotion to truth, and of womanly faithfulness and love in domestic life. The poet of the Mahabharata relies on the supposed incidents of a war handed down from generation to generation in songs and ballads, and weaves them into an immortal work of art; the poet of the Ramayana conjures up the memories of a golden age, constructs lofty ideals of piety and faith, and describes with infinite pathos domestic scenes and domestic affections which endear the work to modern Hindus. As an heroic poem,

the Mahabharata stands on a higher level; as a poem delineating the softer emotions of our everyday life, the Ramayana sends its roots deeper into the hearts and minds of the millions in India. The whole tenor of the Ramayana is subdued and calm, pacific and pious; the whole tenor of the Mahabharata is warlike and spirited. It is in truth and power in the depicting of scenes and not in the delineation of warriors and warlike incidents that the Ramayana excels. The righteous devotion of Rama, and the faithfulness and womanly love of Sita, run like two threads of gold through the whole fabric of the poem. Rama and Sita are Hindu ideals of a perfect man and a perfect woman; their endurance under privations, and their devotion to duties under all vicissitudes of fortune form the Hindu ideal of a perfect life. Sorrow and suffering, trial and endurance are a part of the Hindu ideal of a perfect life of righteousness. Rama suffers for fourteen years in exile, and is chastened by privations and misfortunes, before he ascends the throne of his father. The pious Hindu saw in Rama's life the ideal of a true Hindu life, the success and the triumphs which follow upon endurance and faith and devotion to duty. And if trial and endurance are a part of a Hindu's ideal of a man's life, devotion and self-abnegation are still more essentially a part of his ideal of a woman's life. Sita holds a place in the hearts of women in India which no other creation of a poet's imagination holds among any other nation on earth. There is not a Hindu woman whose earliest and tenderest recollections do not cling around the story of Sita's suffering, and Sita's faithfulness told in the nursery, taught in the family circle, remembered and cherished through life. The creative

imagination of the Hindus has conceived no loftier and holier character than Sita; the literature of the world has not produced a higher ideal of womanly love, womanly truth and womanly devotion.

The Mahabharata depicts the political life of ancient India, with all its valor and heroism, ambition and lofty chivalry. The Ramayana embodies the domestic and religious life of ancient India with all its tenderness and sweetness, its endurance and devotion.

The Ramayana and the Mahabharata, the two great Sanskrit poems or treasure houses of ancient poetry present for the Indian mind what the Homeric poems represented for the mind of Greece. The great Indian Epics, as they exist today, are the record of the imaginative and spiritual life of India during many ages whose precise and literal history is lost to us, but whose religious, social and political conditions are reflected in the great stream of traditions, stories and legends, flowing down from remote periods, 1800 or 2000 B. C., when the first Aryan settlers in India found themselves at war with the barbarous indigenous tribes, onwards to the spiritually civilized epoch when the religious evolution of Buddhism had come to disturb sacerdotalism and arbitrary dogmas, established in Brahmanism.

Love of ourselves, esteem of ourselves, false freedom of spirit, are roots which cannot be easily plucked out of the human heart; but we can prevent their bearing any fruits, which are sins; as for their starts or buddings we cannot prevent them altogether, so long as we are in this life, though we can moderate their dimensions by the practice of contrary virtues, especially by the love of God.

—*St. Francis de Sales.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

By Swami Abhedananda.

DOES the soul exist after death?
Yes.

What is the difference between soul and spirit?

According to the Vedanta philosophy, soul, or individual soul, or living soul, means the ego. When spiritualists use the word spirit they mean the living soul or the ego. But this word is also used in a higher sense, and by spirit we mean the *Atman*, that is, the unchangeable basis of consciousness and intelligence. Consciousness or intelligence is the light which illumines our inner nature, and spirit or Atman is the source from which proceeds that light or consciousness. Soul or spirit is the receptacle, as it were, of the spirit. It is the spirit plus mind with its various modifications. Mind includes all the mental activities, such as intellect, understanding, memory, emotion, power of perception, etc.

Does the Vedanta philosophy teach Nirvana, or the annihilation of the soul?

No. On the contrary, it teaches that the true nature of man is beginningless and endless.

What do you mean by Nirvana?

The cessation of all imperfections, and the attainment of perfection, and freedom from the bondages of ignorance, selfishness, sorrow, suffering and misery.

Shall we lose our individuality after death?

No. We can never lose our individuality. We retain it through all eternity. As the Atman or our divine nature is eternal, so is our individuality.

Has the soul any form?

No. But it can take any form. The soul or ego is the invisible germ of life, which contains within it mind, sense-powers, vital energy, and the finer particles of ethereal matter. It is called the subtle body, or spiritual body, as in the New Testament, when it appears in a finer form.

What is our divine nature?

The Atman or spirit. It is one with the Universal Spirit or the absolute reality of the universe. It is pure, sinless, immortal and perfect.

Does Vedanta teach that this world is an illusion?

No. It teaches that this phenomenal world is the objectified thought of God; that the universe is the result of the evolution of the one eternal energy which is called in Sanskrit *Prakṛti*, the Latin *Procreatrix*, or *Mâyâ*, meaning the Creative Energy or Divine Will. Some translate *Mâyâ* to mean illusion, not knowing its proper meaning. *Mâyâ* never means illusion. When a Vedanta philosopher says the phenomena are *Mâyâ*, he means that they are relative, conditional, and not absolute.

Was Jesus a dualist or a monist?

Jesus the Christ was a dualist when He said, "Our Father which art in heaven." He was a qualified non-dualist when He said, "My Father is greater than I," and when He used the illustration of the vine and its branches. He was a monist when He said, "I and My Father are one," and "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." He recognized these three stages and explained them in these ways so that His disciples might comprehend.

What is the practical use of the Vedanta philosophy?

The practical use of this philosophy consists in the

knowledge of our true nature. It teaches us what we are, why we have come into this world, the purpose of life and how to fulfill that purpose, and how we can live as masters and not as slaves. Now we are living as slaves of our desires, slaves of our senses, attached to the transitory things of this world. We are denying the real being of our soul and spirit, which are our true nature. By the help of the teachings of Vedanta we can become free from all these bondages, gain spiritual enlightenment and attain perfection in this life. Understanding these teachings helps us to manifest divinity through all the world of our every-day life and to love our neighbors as our true Self, which is divine and one.

A PRAYER OF A DEVOTEE.

I have made Thee the pole-star of my life
So that I shall not lose my way any longer in this sea
of life.

Wherever I go, Thou art present,
And Thou wipest off the tears of my troubled soul with
Thy Light serene.

In the secret closet of my heart, the vision of Thy face
comes always before me.

If it is absent even for a moment, I am overwhelmed
with grief.

Even if my mind feels to go astray, the vision of Thy
face makes me feel ashamed. Om Hari Om.

There can be but one kind of Religion, as one ocean, the different names given to it indicating our partial conceptions or distinctions belonging to the thinker's mind, not to the religion itself.—*Theodore Parker.*

CURRENT NEWS.

Swami Paramananda of Boston will be in San Francisco about the tenth of August. The Swami is the head of the Vedanta Center in Boston, which he established in 1909. In April, 1910, suitable quarters were secured at 16 St. Botolph Street, where regular classes and Sunday lectures were held for four years.

The Center moved to its permanent home, 1 Queensbury Street, May 19, 1914. A Community House has been established in connection with it for the Sisters, Women-workers and for earnest students desirous of living for a time in retreat and to come more directly under the teaching. There are no fixed membership dues. Those who desire to affiliate themselves with the work will communicate with the Secretary.

The Vedanta Society of New York has just entered upon a new chapter in its history. The former home of the Society on Eightieth street was given up at the end of June this year. New quarters were found which are in every respect admirably adapted to the needs of the work, and the location is one which appeals to all. For directly opposite is Central Park with its natural beauty, giving a view of shady trees, blossoming shrubs and green grass—a refreshing and restful outlook, one peculiarly fitting as an accompaniment to the study of the Vedanta, the teaching of which brings us so close to the thought of the "Motherhood of Nature."

The prospects for increased activity in the work are most encouraging. Not only because already many new comers are attracted to the present Headquarters, but

also because the workers are conscious of greater freedom and foresee a broadening field of usefulness.

The address of the New York Vedânta Society is 236 Central Park West. The Sunday Lectures are at 3 P.M. Tuesday evenings at 8 is the Gita Class. Wednesday afternoon 3—5 is Reception, when Swami Bodhanânda is glad to see those who call. Thursday evening at 8 is the Meditation Class for members, who are given practical instruction. The Library is open daily 11—4.

Assured of the cordial sympathy of all lovers of Vedânta, the New York Society looks forward with renewed energy and enthusiasm to the coming season's labor, laying their work and its fruits, as an offering of love, at the feet of the Lord.

Sunday, August 15th, will be India Day at the Panama-Pacific Exposition. The program will be as follows:

Sunday Morning in Civic Auditorium, 9:30 A. M.

Address—"Industrial Education Abroad," by Saranadhar Das, Hawaii.

Address—"Canning Industries in India," by S. K. Roy, B. S. Urbana, Ill.

Address—"Progress of Electrical Engineering in U. S.," by D. K. Choudry, A. B., Seattle, Wash.

Report of the Resolution Committee.

Sunday Afternoon, 2:30 P. M.

Meeting at the Fillmore Street Entrance of the P. P. I. Exposition.

Reception at the California Building.

Response to the Address of the President of the Exposition by the Chairman of the Convention.

Brief addresses of other distinguished guests.

Introduction of India Exhibit organizers by the Chairman.

Address—"Formation of the Exhibits," by Maneck J. Bhungara.

Address—"America's Possibilities of Trade with India," by Ram Nath Puri.

Social Entertainment in the California Building.



Sunday Evening, 8 P. M.

Address—"Mass and Popular Education in India, by Harish Chandra (Gurukula).

Brief Addresses by others to be followed by discussion.

Report of Resolution Committee.

Friday July 30th was Hindu day at the Congress of Religious Philosophies held at the Civic Auditorium, San Francisco, July 29th, 30th, and 31st, under the auspices of the Panama Pacific Exposition. The Chairman of the day was Dr. K. D. Sastri, who opened the session with a learned discourse on the "Philosophy of the Vedas." He was followed by other speakers, who covered such interesting topics as "The Universality of Hinduism," "The Philosophy of the Brahmo-Somaj," "The Philosophy of Zoroasterism," "Philosophical Aspects of the Sikh Religion," etc.

SAYINGS OF BUDDHA.

Hatred does not cease by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love; that is its nature.

Let us live happily, not hating those who hate us. Among men who hate us, let us live free from hatred.

Let one overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good. Let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth.

All men tremble at punishment, all men fear death. Remember that you are like unto them, and do not kill, nor cause slaughter.

The fault of others is easily perceived, but that of oneself is difficult to perceive; a man winnows his neighbor's faults like chaff, but his own he hides, as a cheat hides the bad die from the gambler.

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THE BIBLE AND THE GITA.

By the late Swami Trigunatita.



THE general term for the Hindu Bible is the Gîtâ, but there are many such Bibles in the Hindu religion. The original Bible is the Vedas, and from the Vedas all other Hindu Bibles have emanated. Ordinarily, the Bible that is read and studied by the Hindus is the Gîtâ. The Christian Bible consists of the Old Testament and the New Testament, but we shall take into consideration, principally, the New Testament.

We do not mean that we are going to compare simply one Bible, the Christian, and another, the Hindu, but we are going to explain that all the Bibles of the world are the same. They preach one and the same truth in different words, in different ways. The expression "universality of religions of the world" means the universality of all the Scriptures of the world.

The Christian Bible's subject is the Christ; the Hindu Bible's subject is just the same, the Christ. Although the Christian Bible was written by the apostles and evangelists, still the author was really Jesus the Christ, as the words recorded therein came from His lips. So the Hindu Bible, although reproduced by a certain sage, contains the words from the lips of the Lord, Śrī Kṛishṇa, one of the principal Christs of India. In Christendom

you have only one Christ, and you say that He is the only Christ for the whole world. The Hindus have many Christs in so many centuries, or rather ages or cycles. They do not believe that there is only one Christ for all the nations of the world, for all the diversified minds of human beings.

What is the age of the Christian Bible and what is the age of the Hindu Bible, the Gîtâ? The Christian Bible is nineteen hundred years old. The Hindu Bible is four thousand years old according to one version, according to another it dates from four thousand years before the birth of Christ. The Bible will tell you the world was created five thousand years ago: then how can it be that the Gîtâ was written six thousand years ago? Matthew Arnold says, that from the internal evidence of certain histories, he came to the conclusion that the Gîtâ was written at least one thousand four hundred years before Christ, during the time of Moses.

Last Sunday we alluded to the Sonship of God, and we promised to talk about that Sonship to-night. There are several methods of going to God. It cannot be that there is only one road leading to God, to salvation. As we have different tendencies, different views, different objects, and different means for the accomplishment of those objects, it is natural that salvation must be obtained by different ways by different persons. If you study the Christian religion, from the practical side—that is, by trying to put into your daily life the teachings of the Lord—you will understand that there are several methods and ways of going to Him.

The mother of the Christian religion is the Hebrew religion. You will find in it that Adam, the first father

of man, was the first son of God. Not that Christ was the only son of God. The first son of God was Adam. We get Sonship there. And next—take the principal incidents, because the minor ones are hard to understand—Abraham was considered to be a friend of God. First you have the sonship of God; next you come to the friendship of God. And then you come to the Christ, who was also the Son of God. He preached sonship to a greater extent, and not only that but other relations that we can have or bear to God. One is the relation between the master and his disciples, another is the relation of peacefulness and quietude, and a third—the nuptial relation between the Lord and His creatures or people. Why so many ways? Because we have so many tendencies. As a matter of fact, if you go into the inner life of real Christians, you will understand that they all are going through different paths with one and the same object in view, that of going to the Lord. Though the methods are different, the object is just one.

In all the Scriptures of the Hindu religion, especially in the Gītā, you will find that there are principally five methods of going to God. Those who have read of Lord Gauranga will understand more clearly these five methods. The first is the *Shanta* method, meaning the peaceful method of going to God. What does that mean? Remaining undisturbed by environments or surroundings, always being balanced in mind; self-controlled men go through this method of peacefulness to God. Controlling one's self, and then finding within the Supreme Self, we call *Shanta Bhava*, the peaceful way.

Then comes *Dasya Bhava*, meaning literally, serving,—the relation between the master and his servant. Christ

is our Master and we are His servants. We are to obey His commandments, His teachings, His words, His voice,—in every way we are to obey Him, in thought, in deed, in every respect. He is our Master and we are His servants. "Thy will be done." His will is to be done in every way, not ours. We are but servants. He is to command, He is to dictate; we are to follow, we are to wait for His commandment. Unless we hear a word from Him we are not to move. Utter submission to the will of God,—that is *Dasya Bhava*. You will find that many true Christians practice this in their lives.

Then comes *Sakhya Bhava*, the relation of friendship. God is my friend. But this relation to God is very hard, because we make so many mistakes. Even the Hindu sages made mistakes. For instance, Arjuna was a great friend, or rather a constant friend of Śrī Kṛishṇa's. Śrī Kṛishṇa was so kind and loving to Arjuna that he offered His services as driver of Arjuna's chariot. Arjuna was king and Śrī Kṛishṇa was his friend, in the king's council. Even that Arjuna, who received so much of Divine favor and grace all the time, made many mistakes in behavior towards his great, divine friend, Śrī Kṛishṇa. In the *Gītā* you will find that he regretted addressing Śrī Kṛishṇa, the Lord of the Universe, in familiar words, etc. Abraham bore that relation to God: Abraham was a great soul. But that relation, being so hard, is not often found.

Then comes *Batsalya Bhava*, the relation of affection. What kind of affection? Like that of a mother to her child, and maybe vice versa. God is our mother, or say father, and we are the children; or He is our baby, our child, our son, or even daughter, and we are His parents. That is still harder, but you will find in many

of the ancient religions, more ancient than Christianity, that practice was and still is prevalent. God has been made the devotee's son, child,—so that the devotee may practice unselfish love, because the mother is ever unselfish towards her child. If we establish other relations to God, we expect every moment so much from Him: God do this, God do that. God, why have you done this? Why have you made so many people miserable? Why have you made this person wealthy and me poor? And this and that, all the time complaining, complaining. But if you bear that relation, that you are His mother, or father, and He is your child, then you will not expect so much from Him, and in the meantime you can develop your affection and love towards Him. It makes no difference in what way the development is produced so long as you become more and more attached to Him, come nearer and nearer to Him. The more you love Him as your child, the nearer you will come to Him, the more you will think of Him in the most unselfish way. Mary and her son was an instance of that relation in the Christian religion.

Then comes *Madhur Bhaba*, the nuptial relation. Not in its worldly sense, but in its purest sense. He is our husband and we are, one and all, his wives. In the West, people will laugh, but many Christians will understand. Some Western people believe that Christ is the husband not only of woman, but of man. How is that, that Christ becomes the husband of man? You know the literal meaning of husband, or husbandman? The husbandman is the plougher. So He ploughs the land, and man and woman on earth become His wife. In His eyes there is only one essence, one spirit, one thought,

one idea. What is it within us that is going to bear some relation to Him? Our body? Is it the nose, the eyes, or the ears, or the flesh that is going to bear relation to God, whom we sometimes take as impersonal and as all-pervading? Who is going to establish a relation with Him? This body, material body, or something that is internal? Who is going to bear some love, some affection, to Him?—This body? This body will never be able to enjoy bodily pleasures from Him. Who is it then? The internal self. What is another name for it? The soul.

The soul is always feminine, she; be it that of man or woman, it is she always. That soul is going to The Soul. This individual soul is flowing, is running to the Supreme Soul. And that Supreme Soul is the head, is ever supreme, is the husband, which takes care of this individual soul. The individual soul, so long as it is individual, cannot but be dependent on the earnings of that Supreme Soul. Whatever the Supreme Soul gives to the individual ones can be enjoyed. The individual soul has every right to bear a nuptial relation to the Supreme Soul, and that nuptial relation is Divine: is the union of soul to Soul, of the individual to the Supreme or the Absolute. That Soul was one in the beginning and is ever so, but in the middle we have been confounded and lost in this world. So we are seeking and searching and trying to be united with Him. That is the nuptial idea of God and man.

These relations are matters of spiritual practice in the dualistic ideas of God. God is the Supreme Being, the Ruler, the Creator, and we His creatures, His created beings; but by and by, as we rise higher and higher, we come nearer and nearer to Him and eventually become

one with Him. We become one with Him and lose our individuality and realize that oneness in Him. And there becomes nothing else but one God, no other thing except Him, no other thing than He alone. That is the object of this practice. From dualistic ideas we go to the non-dualistic idea of God. From the very beginning of creation, today, and for all eternity, all these practices will remain in every religion on earth. No matter how much you philosophize on the Absolute, the impersonal ideas of God, the moment you come to your practical life of religion you will understand, you will feel the need for establishing a closer relationship between God and yourself.

First, we have *Shanta*, meaning the method of quietude. This, according to some religionists, is the first stage of our relation to God. First self-control; and then quiet calmness of the mind, so that environments and surroundings and the temptations of the world will not be able to disturb us. That is *Shanta*. Then comes *Dasya*: when we have been able to control our senses, our mind, our body, to a great extent, then we are worthy of establishing a relationship to God. This relation will be,—He is our Master and we are His servants. Because we find that yet, although we have already controlled, to a great extent, our mind and senses, still we have many defects. Our very existence in the midst of the world shows that we are mortal, we are dependent on so many objects, we need so many things, etc.; and we suffer so much in mind and body. So we say, God you are our Master, relieve us from this miserable world, from this miserable life, or give us plenty so that we can devote more time and energy to You. That is *Dasya*.

When we rise still higher, we establish a higher relation, *Sakhya*, the friendly path. God becomes our friend. When a servant in an office or an establishment is very faithful, energetic and persevering, the master treats him as a friend and he says, "Come and sit by me," asks him about every point of his work, and they become friends. When you rise still higher, your relation becomes greater and higher, more productive: *Batsalya*, the relation of affection. The relation between the servant and his master is not so close, but the relation of a father to his child, or of a mother to her child, is a relation of attachment. Not attachment in the worldly sense, but attachment in its purer sense, holy sense. It is a matter of great grace if we become attached to God. Then comes *Madhur Bhaba*, meaning the nuptial relation: oneness. There the nuptial idea means oneness of man and God. Man becomes God. You will find glimpses, a little allusion, a little reference to all these practices in the Bible, in the New Testament.

(To be continued)

Self-love never dies but when we die; it has a thousand means of concealment in our soul, so that we cannot dislodge it. It is the eldest-born of the soul; it is natural to us, it heads a battalion of rifles, with dreadful mutinies, stratagems, passions. Nothing can be more adroit; it has a thousand quick evolutions. Self-love makes us desire to do such and such a thing of our own choice, but we would not desire to do it if of another's choice, or from obedience. On the other hand, if we possessed the perfection of the love of God, we would far prefer to do what is commanded, because it proceeds more from the love of God, and less from ourselves.—*St. Francis de Sales*.

SAYINGS OF ŚRĪ RĀMAKṚISHŪA

¶ Falling in the meshes of phenomena, the ever-Blissful Brahman appears to weep and wail.

¶ Who could have realized the Absolute Brahman if there were no Mâyâ and her manifestations?

¶ At one time I am clothed, at another naked, so Brahman is at one time with attributes and at another without.

¶ He who tries to give an idea of God by mere book learning is like the man who tries to give an idea of Kasi (Benares) by means of a map or picture.

¶ In the course of his instructions to his disciple, the Guru raised two fingers by which he meant the duality of "Brahman and Mâyâ," then lowering one finger, he taught him that when Mâyâ vanishes, nothing of the universe remains but the one Absolute Brahman.

¶ God is like unto a hill of sugar. A small ant carries away from it a small grain of sugar, a bigger one takes from it a considerably larger grain. But the hill remains as large as before. So are the devotees of God. They become ecstatic with even a grain of one Divine attribute. No one can contain within him all His attributes.

¶ Q. Can Brahman be described? A. It cannot be explained by words. As a man called upon to give an idea of the ocean, to a person who has never seen it, can only say, "It is a vast sheet of water, a big expanse of water, it is water—water all round;" so one who has realized Brahman can only say, "Brahman, Brahman is everywhere."

THE RELATION OF THE SOUL TO GOD.

Abstract of lecture by Swami Abhedananda.

"The soul enchained is 'man', and free from chain is God."—"Life and Sayings of Ramakrishna," by F. Max Muller, p. 145.

A CLEAR understanding of man's relation to God is a matter of momentous importance to students of philosophy and religion and to all seekers of Truth. Every philosophy and every religion, ancient or modern, has arrived at certain conclusions in its attempt to describe the relation which each individual bears to God. All such conclusions, of course, presuppose the existence of God, and depend upon the nature of our conception of God as well as of the human soul. Those who deny the existence of God and hold that we are but mere accidental appearances in the mechanical process of the blind forces of nature, which are acting aimlessly upon dead matter, think that it is loss of time and energy to discuss such useless and absurd topics. They do not believe in the existence of any such thing as soul, mind or spirit, apart from body. When the body dies everything comes to an end. They make sense perception the standard of their knowledge of things, and deny the existence of everything that they can not perceive by their senses.

There is another class of thinkers who go beneath the surface of the sense perceptions into the realm of the invisible, weigh materialistic arguments, point out their fallacies, and ultimately establish through logic and science, the existence of the individual soul of man as well as the soul of the universe, or God, and describe their mutual relation. These thinkers can be divided

into three classes: first the dualists, secondly, the qualified non-dualists, and thirdly, the non-dualists, or monists.

The dualists believe in an extra-cosmic personal God, who created the universe out of nothing, fashions it, gives names to the phenomena, and afterwards governs it. According to them, God, the creator and governor of the universe, is eternally separate from the universe and from all living creatures. They believe that God has human traits infinitely magnified, and even go so far as to give Him form. The relation of man to such a personal, or rather human God, is like that of a subject to his king, or of a servant to his master. As the duty of a subject is to obey implicitly the commands of his king, or governor or ruler, so every man's duty is to obey the commands of the Governor of the universe, otherwise he will be punished.

Although, in Genesis, man is said to be created in God's image, yet it is generally understood that he cannot have any relation to God higher than that of a creature to his creator. Although the Christians believe that Jesus the Christ was the Son of God, and God is the Father of the universe, yet according to them, an ordinary mortal cannot be called the son of God in the same sense as Jesus of Nazareth was, because he was an exception to the general rule. Thus, according to popular Christianity, as it is understood and preached in the orthodox churches, man's relation to God is not that of His image or of a son to his loving Father, but of a subject to his despotic monarch, Christ being the only begotten son of God. As long as there is preached the idea of the creation of the universe and man out of nothing by an extra-cosmic personal God with human attributes, so

long will our relation to God remain like that of a creature to his creator or of the governed to his governor.

In India there are dualists too. They believe in an extra-cosmic personal God, who is the repository of all the blessed qualities, who is omnipotent, omniscient, all-loving; who creates the universe, not out of nothing, but out of the material of nature, which is eternal. God is the efficient cause of the universe and nature is the material cause. They do not believe that the human soul comes into existence all of a sudden and has a beginning, but that it existed in the past and will exist in future from eternity to eternity. They say that as nature is eternal, so are individual souls. Each soul after remaining potentially in nature for some time, comes out of the causal state at the beginning of a new cycle of creation or evolution, and manifests in gross forms, one after another, according to its desires and tendencies, until it reaches perfection. After reading the New Testament one cannot get any definite conception of the nature of the human soul, nor of its destiny, but in the dualistic system of India one learns that the human soul is like an infinitesimal particle of nature containing the divine light of intelligence and divine power in an infinitely small degree, whose duty is to serve God through prayers, good deeds, good thoughts and love. God loves all and He can be loved in return. Those who worship Him through unswerving devotion and unselfish love obtain freedom from the dark side of nature; that is, from the bondages of ignorance, selfishness, suffering, misery and all other imperfections; and after death they live a life of perfection and bliss forever in the presence of the eternal, personal God. That is salvation accord-

ing to the dualists in India. They do not mean by salvation going to heaven, but, on the contrary, hold that heaven is a place where one goes to enjoy the rewards of one's good deeds, and at the end of such a period of celestial enjoyment one comes back to earth and is born again. Each soul is bound to attain this salvation, sooner or later. Those who do wicked deeds reap the results of their actions and thoughts, not by going to any place of eternal fire and punishment, but by being born again and again until they reach the state of spirituality, devotion and righteousness.

The dualists in India do not believe that God punishes anybody, as He is the embodiment of Divine Love. Nor do they believe in eternal suffering, nor in any Satan or creator of evil. But they do believe in a temporary suffering of the wicked, which is the reaction of their own wicked acts. They do not blame God or charge Him with partiality, but they take upon their own shoulders the whole burden of responsibility. They believe that wherever there is life there is the manifestation of the divine light of intelligence, however small it may be, however imperfect the expression of intelligence may be. From the minutest insect up to the highest gods, or angels, or bright spirits, each individual life is filled with a ray of that Divine Sun. Although they believe that each soul is separate from God and from other souls, yet its relation to God is like that of a ray to the sun or of spark to fire. Their conception of the human soul is with attributes, with qualities and character, with mind, intellect, sense powers, and the fine particles of ethereal matter which give foundation to grosser physical forms. In short, it is the same as the individual ego, as we call

it, or the spiritual body as it is called in the New Testament. According to these dualists, God can be worshipped by man through various relations, such as by calling Him master, or father, or brother, or friend, or son or husband. These relations depend upon the nature and characteristics of the worshipper. Some like to think themselves as servants of God, others as friends, or brothers or sons. They say, that as the same man in a household can be the master in relation to his servants, the father in relation to his sons, a friend, a brother, or a husband in relation to his wife, so the same God can appear in all those various relations to different individuals according to their nature.

The qualified non-dualists go a little deeper than the dualists. Starting from the dualistic standpoint they go a step further towards the realization of Truth and man's relation to God. According to them, God is no longer extra-cosmic, but intra-cosmic. He is no longer governor from the outside, but *Antaryamin*, inter-ruler. He is imminent and resident in nature. He inter-penetrates every particle of the universe. The physical universe is His gross physical body. He has infinite eyes, infinite ears, and infinite organs of other senses. He sees through the eyes of all the living creatures of the universe. He hears through all the ears that exist in the universe. He has infinite heads. The wind is His breath. His mind is the sum total of individual minds, or in other words, the Cosmic Mind. His intellect is the Cosmic Intellect. His soul is the Cosmic Ego, or the soul of the universe. He is no longer the creator of the universe, or one who fashions the materials of nature and gives names and forms to phenomena like a carpenter or a potter. He is

not the efficient cause alone, as the dualists maintain, but He is both efficient and material cause of the universe. He creates, that is, He projects into the physical space the phenomenal forms out of nature or divine energy which is in His body. He is the one living Being in the whole universe. He is the one stupendous Whole, and we are but parts. In that process of projection or evolution of nature, infinite numbers of individual souls, which existed in His body from the beginningless past, come out on the physical plane, play their parts according to their desires, and fulfill their purpose through the process of evolution. Each individual soul is like a spark which emanates from the huge bonfire of God, and lives in and through God, but it cannot be called God. God dwells everywhere. He pervades the universe and nature, and yet He transcends them both. He is infinite but personal, without any human form. The qualified non-dualists say that God cannot be confined to any form, because every form is a limitation in space by time, while God is unlimited by space or time. He is beyond space and time. Our body is part of God's body, our mind is a part of the divine or universal mind, our will is a part of the universal or cosmic will. This is called qualified non-dualism because it teaches unity qualified by variety. That is, God is one, the universe and souls are one in God, yet each retains its own separate individuality. God is like a tree and we are like the branches thereof. According to this class of thinkers the individual soul possesses all the qualities of the human ego. As our ego has mind, intellect, sense-power, memory, and is limited by other egos, so is the soul. After death the soul contracts its qualities within itself,

and at the time of its birth it expands these latent powers. Our ego or soul is part of the cosmic ego, or the soul of the universe, or God.

The monistic or non-dualistic thinkers push their investigations still further, and analyze the nature of the individual soul or ego, and ultimately discover the unchangeable essence of the ego. They are the seekers of the unchangeable reality of the universe. In their search they will not stop until they reach that Truth which is immutable, eternal and one. Analyzing the nature of the ego, they find that it cannot be the unchangeable reality or immutable Truth, because the mind, with its various modifications, such as intellect, memory, etc., is constantly changing. After patient research and continuous struggle to know the ultimate Truth, these great monistic sages realized that the ego, or the individual soul, is nothing but a changeful receptacle of a still subtler substance, which is unchangeable and eternal. They call it the *Atman*, in Sanskrit. It is much finer than ego or the living soul of the individual. Atman is the unconditioned reality in man; and the living soul or the individual ego is the subtle covering of the Atman, like the globe that covers the light of a lamp. The Atman is not a part of the universal ego, but is one with the unconditioned Reality of the universe, which is called in Sanskrit *Brahman*, or the All-pervading Spirit or the Absolute. Sometimes it is called *Paramatman*, which was translated by Ralph Waldo Emerson as Over-Soul. It is finer than the Cosmic Ego or God. It is sexless, neither masculine nor feminine. It is sometimes translated by Oriental scholars as the Self. But Self is a confusing word. Some people mistake it for the Anglo-

Saxon self, which acts and progresses, and which is another name for the ego. According to the non-dualist, the Atman or Self or the spiritual essence of man, is the same as the Brahman, the spiritual or divine essence of the universe. It is no longer like that of a creature to the Creator, nor like that of a son to his father, nor like that of a part to the whole, but it is absolute oneness on the highest spiritual plane. On that highest spiritual plane there is no distinction, no idea of separateness, no idea of creation. All ideas of separateness, all differentiations of phenomenal names and forms, merge into the absolute ocean of reality, which is unchangeable, eternal and one. The essence of the Creator is infinite, and it interpenetrates the phenomenal forms as the external space pervades every particle of the atoms of the phenomenal world. Phenomena are like the waves in the ocean of Infinite Reality. Individual souls are like so many bubbles on that ocean of Absolute Existence. The light of intelligence in the soul or ego is due to the reflection of the Atman or Divine Spirit on the mirror of the heart of the ego or soul. Therefore, the soul is called the image or reflection of the Atman or Divine Spirit. The idea is beautifully expressed in one of the Upanishads: "In the cave of our heart have entered the two—the Atman or the Divine Spirit, and the individual or soul. Dwelling on the highest summit, or the ether of the heart, the one witnesses the other, while the soul drinks the reward of its own works. The wise man and sages describe the one as light, and the other as the reflection, image or shadow." (Katha Upanishad, ch. III, verse 1). But as a reflection cannot exist independent of the light whose reflection it is, so the soul of man can-

not exist independent of Atman. Therefore, the true nature of the soul is Atman, the divine and real spirit which cannot be divided into parts and is One Being of existence, intelligence and bliss.

Vedanta philosophy recognizes these three explanations. It says that the relation of the soul to God varies as the conception of the individual soul and God becomes higher and finer. Starting from the gross form of body, when a real and earnest seeker after Truth marches onwards towards the Absolute, he passes through all the intermediate stages until he reaches that state of divine communion where he realizes the oneness of the Atman, or the true nature of man, with Brahman, the cosmic Divine essence, or the Absolute Reality of the universe. A Vedanta philosopher or sage after realizing that absolute oneness on the highest spiritual plane of the Atman, says, when he returns to the plane of relativity and phenomena:

"O Lord, when I think of my body, I am Thy servant and Thou art my Master; when I look at my soul, I am Thy part and Thou art the one stupendous Whole; but when I realize my true nature, I am divine and one with Thee, the Absolute Spirit. Such is my conception of my relation to Thee."

Acquire knowledge, because he who acquires it performs an act of piety—he who speaks of it praises God—he who dispenses it performs an act of charity, and he who employs it performs an act of devotion. Knowledge enables one to distinguish good from evil, it illuminates the road to heaven, it is our friend in the solitude, our companion when without friends.—*Mahommed*.

NOTES OF CLASS TALKS.

By Swami Vivekananda

THE first stage of Yoga is *Yama*. To master *Yama* five things are necessary:

- 1st. Non-injuring any being by thought, word and deed.
- 2nd. Speaking the truth in thought, word and deed.
- 3rd. Non-covetousness in thought, word and deed.
- 4th. Perfect chastity in thought, word and deed.
- 5th. Perfect sinlessness in thought, word and deed.

Holiness is the greatest power. Everything else quails before it.

Then comes *Asana* or posture of a devotee. The seat must be firm, the head, hips and body in a straight line, erect, saying to yourself that you are firmly seated and that nothing can move you. Then mention the perfection of the body, bit by bit, from head to feet. Think of it as being clear as crystal, and as a perfect vessel to sail over the sea of life.

Pray to God and to all the Prophets and Saviors of the world and holy spirits in the universe to help you.

Then for half an hour practice *Pranayama*, or the suspending, restraining and controlling of the breath, mentally repeating the word *Om* as you inhale and exhale the breath. Words charged with their spirit have wonderful power.

The other stages of Yoga are: (1) *Pratyahara* or the restraint of the organs of sense from all outward things, and directing them entirely to mental impressions; (2) *Dharana* or steadfast concentration; (3) *Dhyana* or meditation; (4) *Samadhi* or abstract meditation. It is the highest and last stage of Yoga. *Samadhi* is perfect absorption

of thought into the Supreme Spirit, when one realizes, "I and my Father are one."

Do one thing at a time and while you are doing it put your whole soul into it to the exclusion of all else.

—*Prabuddha Bharata.*

PEACE.

"Peace," the wise note of men of master-mind,
Of those high souls whose voices still resound
Through all our worlds and wars,

Come, Prince of Peace;
Flash forth the love-light from thy God-lit lamp,
That all who live may live as one in love.

Eric Hammond, Prabuddha Bharata.

CURRENT NEWS.

"Religion—The Crying Need of the Day," and "True Universality and Tolerance" were the subjects upon which Swâmi Paramananda of the Boston Vedanta Center lectured during his recent visit to San Francisco. An abstract of the latter, which was delivered at the Hindu Temple, will appear in an early issue.

Pending the time that a Swâmi comes from India, to take the place left vacant by the death of our beloved Teacher, Swâmi Īriguñâtita, services are being held at the Hindu Temple on Thursday and Sunday evenings. Thursday evening there is a meditation class followed by a reading from Swâmi Vivekananda's works. Sunday evening there is either a lecture or a reading. The latter is open and free to the public.

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THE BIBLE AND THE GITA.

By the late Swami Trigunatita.

(Continued from the September Number.)



OW, coming to other points: Adam ate the forbidden fruit, therefore he had to suffer from the effect of it. Not only he, but all his followers and descendants. Who created Adam? God. Then did He not know that Adam was going to eat the forbidden fruit? God was all-knowing—why did He make that tree, that poisonous fruit, and why did He make Adam eat the fruit? It is not that we are going to give you a new explanation or throw a new light upon the Christian Bible, but the Christian Bible itself contains all the answers to such questions. It explains not only the great law of karma, but the mysterious, the magical play of nature or of God on us. Why did He become a magician? We do not know why He became so, but facts are facts, for all that, and we must judge from them. When we shall be able to go to God, we may ask Him why He did so and so, and He may satisfy us with His answer. But now we are judging Him from the facts that we see.

Adam ate the forbidden fruit and he had to suffer from it. The Lord, the Creator has not created karma. Who has created the law of karma, if He has not? He says, "The Creator neither takes anybody's sin nor any-

body's virtue." It is not that unless we become virtuous we cannot go to God and if we be sinful we go to the other place. The Gîtâ says: that human beings and all beings are covered with *ajnanam*, which is Sanskrit for ignorance. Therefore they think that they come under the laws of nature. Otherwise, God has not made any law or any karma, any sin or any virtue. He is ever pure.

Where do you get such ideas? In the Christian Bible: if you study closely you may and you will find, both in the Old and the New Testaments. Do not be unkind to your enemies, do not curse those who are unfriendly towards you. If one should smite you on one cheek, turn the other. God has made the sun to shine both on the sinful and the virtuous, on the good and the evil. God sendeth the rain both on the good and on the evil. So if we get wet and suffer from cold, God is not to blame. And if we get sunburnt, or from want of rain we suffer from scarcity of food and crops, God is not to blame. But in another place in the Bible, you will find the Lord says that He judges according to the work of men, that He will give us according to our works. And in another place: as you sow so shall you reap. Also, he reapeth and receiveth the wages accordingly and that the reaper and the sower both will rejoice together.

The Hindu Bible contains the same idea: if we think of others, all persons will enjoy; but if one becomes selfish, others will have to suffer. So be not selfish. Be always unselfish. If you are not, you will be judged by your work. And judged by whom? By yourself. By your own karma you will be judged. The karma is the giver of the effect of karma. That is the wonderful law of karma. Karma is the cause, karma is the effect, karma

is the giver of the effect, the producer of the effect, the means. God says in the Gītā that neither He gives you any work to do, nor does He send you any sin or virtue through it. You reap your own karma, your own fruit. Adam ate the forbidden fruit. There you get the word "fruit." You do not know whether there was really speaking an apple tree. However, you may believe literally or not, but the safest way is to doubt, so that you may get some answer spiritually that will stand on reason and science. Adam ate the forbidden fruit. Fruit means the fruit of karma. He did not perform the right kind of karma. He ate the forbidden fruit and he had to suffer from the effect of that karma.

Then, in the Christian Bible you will find that the Lord tells you to be indifferent to the thoughts of the comforts of your life, not to think of the morrow, not to take care of the body, not to pay attention to what you will get tomorrow to eat or to drink or to put on. The Hindu Bible also says the same thing: be indifferent to cold and heat, to winter and summer; live in a solitary place, and eat scantily of food, etc. Do not pay attention to the comforts of life at all. And try to give up all kinds of karma by and by.

Leave everything that you have, and either sell, give to the poor, or throw away whatever you have and follow Me, the Lord says. The Gītā says the same thing. Then is it meant that all the people in the world should do this? If you say that Christ is the only way—if you take that passage literally, then you must take this also literally: give away everything that you have and follow Him. Can you do it?

That is not the only way that is preached by Christ—there were many others. The Gîtâ also says, give up all karma and follow Him. The Lord, the teacher of the Gîtâ, Sri Krishna, the Hindu Christ, four thousand years before the birth of Christ, said the same thing, "Give up everything and follow Me." Did He mean that for all classes of people? No. He gave the idea, but how to accomplish it? Through this ordinary life. Do all kinds of karma that you should do, He says to Arjuna, His disciple; do not give up your karma; practice that which you have, your own duty. Through that karma, through that duty, you will rise above the plane of all duties and of all karmas. When? In the course of nature, not by force.

We are not expected to give up everything. In the course of nature, the time will come when the environments will be such that you will have no more karma to perform, no more duty to discharge. You will be free. When? If it be not in this life, in this worldly life (meaning on this earth), maybe hereafter when you pass out you will find yourself, your spirit will find that it has risen above the plane of karma and duty and all that. And if you be very fortunate, in this very life even, you can attain that state, the state of realization. Then you will understand that God has not made any karma, but you have made your own karma, by the laws of nature. Nature by acting on your mind gives rise to such karmas. The Christian Bible says, "Lord, who has done this sin, this man or his parents, that this man has become blind?" The Lord says, "Neither this man nor his parents, but the God that manifests Himself in him."

It is very hard to understand the Scriptures, until we

begin to practice them: because before that the Scriptures cannot be understood. If you read one chapter, say the first chapter of a Scripture, try to practice it in your daily life, and then you will be worthy of studying the second chapter of that Scripture. Just the same way as you go on with your mathematics in school. If you go through all the sums of arithmetic in the lower class, you are entitled to the higher class of mathematics. Not before that, because you will not be able to understand otherwise. So the Scriptures are a matter of practice.

Just now, we said that the Lord is not the creator of our karma. How is it we say "this man has not committed sin, nor his father, but that God is manifesting Himself in Him"? The Gītā says the same thing: God serves like an engineer and He is driving the machine, and the machine is the being, the creature, the creation. What kind of *Iswara* is that? That *Iswara* lives in the heart of every man, of every being. And that *Iswara*, who is the Absolute, has come down here, has manifested himself in the form of that *Mâyâ* (*Mâyâ* meaning Nature). That Nature which is within the heart of every being is driving the machine, and that act of driving of that Nature Engineer is the cause of all our works. The manifestation of God, in other words, is nature, or *Mâyâ*. All beings are working by virtue of the influence of the *Mâyâ*, of nature. Not God. We make a distinction between God and His *Mâyâ*. *Mâyâ* means His power, His creative power, His ruling power, His governing power. He and His power—are they two different things again? No. It is very hard to understand these fine, subtle points of philosophy. The fire and its burning power—can you distinguish them, can

you separate the burning power from fire? If you separate them, fire will not exist. So God and His power. Can you separate them? You say no. How long do you say no? So long as you are in this world, under the influence of Mâyâ, you cannot separate them, but when you rise higher, then you will understand that the fire and the water that puts out that fire are nothing but one. If you rise miles above sea level in a balloon, you will find the truth of oneness. Now when you are on the earth, you find so much variety, but when you rise higher, you find just one. So in spiritual culture,—when you rise high enough in your spiritual progress, you will find there is nothing but one God, but when you come down to this plane you understand that God is one thing, the Creator; and His Mâyâ, His influence, the Creator's influence, and the created being,—so many things.

Now, what is the true nature of God? In the Bible you will find one name of God, which is the most generalized, "I Am." God said to Moses, go and preach to the people "I Am." "I Am" is my name and is ever my name. Everywhere "I Am;" there is no other thing but "I Am." He is, and no creation. Creation is found only where there is ignorance. The sun is one, but seems many when reflected in many different vessels of water. You look in every vessel of water and you will find a sun in every one; but you look up, and you see the sun to be one. When you go through so many practices, so many stages, and you rise to the highest stage, you will find the name of God not any more to be the Christ, but to be "I Am," which name is ever-lasting. "I Am—I Am."

The Hindu Bible says the same thing. Not only the

Gītā and the Vedas, but all the Scriptures say the same thing.

When religionists, when devotees, will, through their religious practices, realize that God is beyond name and form, and God belongs to every being, to every person, alike, then they will understand that His name is "I am." And what other idea do we get from that expression "I am"? We get, "He is." First, we say "He is," and then "I am." *Shivohum* and *Shohum*: *Shiva* meaning that all-pervading God, and "*aham*," I. That all-pervading God is I; I am He. First, we are told that His name is "I am," but if we are to take that expression to apply in every place, "I am everywhere," then here in this body "I am," in that body "I am," in that object "I am,"—"I am, I am, I am." "I am" what? I am He: that God! I am He. As a matter of fact, if you think deeply, you will understand that within you is the reflection, is the shadow, is the image of that God. "I am." I exist here, I exist there, I exist everywhere. I am He. Then, we notice that "I" is the knower, and "I am" is the means, and "He" is the knowledge. Then, after the practice of that impersonal God, nameless and formless God, "I am He," by and by you again say the same thing with which you started, "I am, I am." Still there are two things, "I" and "am." When you rise still higher, then you will say "I, I, I," or "am, am," or say "is, is," meaning "*Asti, Asti*."

That is what the Hindu Bible preaches. Simply that one existence, "*Sat*,"—that is one name of God—and that state is to be attained. It is not that it is to be attained by simply Hindus or Christians, but by all classes of people, high or low.

In the Christian Bible you will find—in many places—

that He has come not to one class of people, but to all, good and bad. And although Christ has said "I am the way," and that this is the only way, and that those persons only who have faith in Him are to receive Him, to go to Him, He is simply addressing a certain class of people. In the Gîtâ also it says: "Follow Me, and Me alone, and then you will be saved." That means that you follow through a method. All other Hindu Saviors say the same thing, "I am the only way." That does not mean that He is the only "way" forever and for all nations and for all ages. If you go to Him, what will be your condition? You and He will be one. All other Bibles of the world say that. There is no difference between Him and His creation. Simply when we look from the lower standpoint, we see so many things, happiness and misery, birth and death; but when we rise higher, we find that there is no birth, no death. Many Christians do not believe in rebirth. That is a good thing, but prove it, live up to it, be true to it. Prove in your practical life that you do not believe in rebirth, that you will not be born, that you will be carried to some other plane. Have you finished your karma, that you want your leave of absence forever from this world? If you have not finished all your work, then you must be born, either here or in heaven. Wherever you go, you will have to work again, unless you finish your work and pay up the debt to nature. Paying the debt to nature means death. But what kind of death? Immortality. That death does not mean the physical death. If you pay the debt to nature, if you go beyond the laws, the region of nature, then you pay all your debt towards Her, and you become immortal. The same thing is preached by both the Christian and the Hindu Bibles.

SAYINGS OF SRĪ RĀMAKṚISHŪA

¶ The soul enchained is "man" (*Jiva*) and free from chains is "God" (*Shiva*).

¶ God is in all men but all men are not in God: that is the reason why they suffer.

¶ As a piece of lead thrown into a basin of mercury soon becomes dissolved, so the individual soul melts away, losing its limitations, when it falls into the ocean of Brahman.

¶ Q. God is infinite, the creature or *Jiva* a finite being. How then can the finite grasp the Infinite? A. It is like a figure of salt trying to fathom the depths of the ocean. In doing so the salt doll is dissolved into the sea and lost. Similarly the *Jiva*, in trying to measure God, loses his individual egoism and becomes one with Him.

¶ As the water and its bubble are one: the bubble has its birth in the water, floats on the water, and ultimately is resolved into water; so the individual ego (*Jivātman*) and the Supreme Spirit (*Paramātman*) are one and the same. The difference is in degree, the one is finite and small, the other is infinite; the one is dependent, the other independent.

¶ The Vedas, Tantras, and the Puranas and all the sacred scriptures of the world have become as if defiled (as food thrown out of the mouth becomes polluted), because they have been constantly repeated by and have come out of human mouths. But the Brahman or the Absolute has never been defiled, for no one as yet has been able to express It by human speech.

BIGOTRY AND DEVOTION.

Extract from a Lecture Delivered at the Vedanta Society (N. Y.)

By Swami Bodhananda.

FAITH in one religion to the exclusion of others is a great superstition. A religion to be sound and beneficial must be based upon reason and love and not upon dogmas and systems. "All formal and dogmatic religions are fallacious and must never be accepted by self-respecting persons as final," said the Philosopher Theon to his daughter Hypatia. "Reserve your right to think, for even to think wrongly is better than not to think at all." True, the state of supreme realization is beyond thought and reason, but you must know it yourself. First-hand knowledge—knowledge by direct experience—is truth. Second-hand knowledge is error. Religion must be realized or it is nothing. Do not be content with theological doctrines, but have a glimpse of the supreme infinite Intelligence—the basic principle of all religion and philosophy.

If there is anything in the world that has wrought the greatest calamity to mankind, it is bigotry and its offspring fanaticism. But for this evil the world would be far more advanced than it is today. All dogmatic and personal religions produce bigots and fanatics. They believe that their special religion is the only true religion in the world, and those who follow that religion alone will go to Heaven; that those who think differently from them and follow other religions will be punished with everlasting Hell. So they induce others by every means to come into their fold, in order that they may be saved from Hell fire and tortures. These bigots are unbalanced

but well-intentioned people. They are blind to truth or have an imperfect and erroneous conception of God and of the Savior. They see the personal side of God only, and not the impersonal side—the supreme, universal form. They do not realize that the Personal God and the Savior are but partial manifestations of the universal Spirit and that this Universal Spirit can manifest itself in other forms also. In this respect the canine instinct is much better than their knowledge. The dog can recognize his master in whatsoever costume he may appear but these deluded ones cannot recognize the same God in different forms.

I will tell you a story to illustrate this position. There once lived in a certain country a religious bigot. He was a worshipper of Krishna. He would not worship other gods or even utter or listen to their names. The children of the neighborhood would tease him by shouting at him the name of Siva. He would become enraged with them, but, being unable to stop them, at last in desperation he suspended little bells on his ears. Whenever the children would cry "Siva, Siva, Siva" he would shake his head in order to ring the bells, thus preventing the name of Siva from being heard. One day Krishna appeared before him in person, and told him that He and Siva and all other gods were one and the same, and he must no longer see any difference between them. The bigot said, "All right, Sir, I will do as You say." In order to ascertain how far His devotee was true to his promise, Krishna appeared to him again the next day in a twain body (half Siva and half Krishna). But lo! the bigot forgot all about his promise and worshipped the Krishna part of the body only. Nay, as he

waved the lighted incense, he closed the Siva nostril lest the odor should enter it. Such is exactly the mental condition of bigots. They would not only not recognize the same God in different forms, but are unloving and intolerant toward all His other manifestations.

The dogmatic religions cannot harmonize themselves with science and philosophy. On the contrary, they condemn and anathematize them as profane and irreligious. But that religion which is based upon the eternal, underlying principle proclaims truth in science and philosophy and is in perfect harmony with them. "The different branches of knowledge (science) are but Thy different forms," says the Veda.

The true devotee, while following one path or ideal, does not condemn other paths and ideals nor hate their followers. He believes in the infinite power and love of God, and knows that He can manifest Himself in various forms and that all paths that men follow through different religious inclinations lead to the same goal.

So far we have seen that bigotry proceeds from ignorance and leads to fanaticism, persecution and dissension; and devotion springs from knowledge of the Eternal Truth and produces and promotes unity, fellowship, harmony and peace among men.

Let a man strive to purify his thoughts. Dwelling within his (Divine) Self with serene thoughts, he obtains imperishable bliss. That happiness which belongs to a mind which by deep meditation has been washed clean from all impurity and has entered within the Self cannot be described by words, it can be felt by the inward power only.—*Maitrayana-Brahmana-Upanishad*.

SIMILARITY BETWEEN THE VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY AND CHRISTIANITY.

Unpublished Notes of a Lecture by Swami Vivekananda.

BETWEEN all great religions of the world there are many points of similarity; and so startling is this likeness, at times, as to suggest the idea that in many particulars the different religions have copied from each other.

This act of imitation has been laid at the door of different religions, but that it is a superficial charge is evident from the following facts:—

Religion is fundamental in the very soul of humanity, and as all life is the evolution of that which is within, it of necessity expresses itself through various peoples and nations.

The language of the soul is one, the languages of nations are many; their customs and methods of life are widely different. Religion is of the soul and finds expression through various nations, languages and customs. Hence it follows that the difference between the religions of the world is one of expression and not of substance; and their points of similarity and unity are of the soul, are intrinsic, as the language of the soul is one, in whatever circumstances it manifests itself. The same sweet harmony is vibrant there also, as it is on many and diverse instruments.

The first thing in common in all great religions of the world is the possession of an authentic book. When religious systems have failed to have such a book, they have become extinct. Such was the fate of the religions of Egypt. The authentic book is the hearthstone, so to

speak, of each great religious system, around which its adherents gather, and from which radiates the energy and life of the system.

Each religion, again, lays the claim that its particular book is the only authentic word of God; and that all other sacred books are false and are impositions upon poor human credulity; and that to follow another religion is to be ignorant and spiritually blind.

Such bigotry is characteristic of the orthodox element of all religions. For instance, the orthodox followers of the Vedas claim that the Vedas are the only authentic word of God in the world; that God has spoken to the world only through the Vedas; not only that, but that the world itself exists by virtue of the Vedas. Before the world was, the Vedas were. Everything in the world exists because it is in the Vedas. A cow exists because the name cow is in the Vedas; that is, because the animal we know as a cow is mentioned in the Vedas. The language of the Vedas is the original language of God, all other languages are mere dialects and not of God. Every word and syllable in the Vedas must be pronounced correctly, each sound must be given its true vibration, and every departure from this rigid exactness is a terrible sin and unpardonable.

Thus, this kind of bigotry is predominant in the orthodox element of all religions. This fighting over the letter is indulged in only by the ignorant, the spiritually blind. All who have actually attained any real religious nature never wrangle over the form in which the different religions are expressed. They know that the life of all religions is the same, and, consequently, they have no quarrel with anybody because he does not speak the same tongue.

The Vedas are, in fact, the oldest sacred books in the world. Nobody knows anything about the time when they were written or by whom. They are contained in many volumes and I doubt that any one man ever read them all.

The religion of the Vedas is the religion of the Hindus, and the foundation of all Oriental religions; that is, all other Oriental religions are offshoots of the Vedas; all Eastern systems of religions have the Vedas as authority.

It is an irrational claim to believe in the teachings of Jesus Christ and at the same time to hold that the greater part of His teachings have no application at the present time. If you say that the reason that the powers do not follow them that believe, (as Christ said they would), is because you have not faith enough, and are not pure enough,—that will be all right. But to say that they have no application at the present time is to be ridiculous.

I have never seen the man who was not, at least, my equal. I have travelled all over the world; I have been among the very worst kind of people—among cannibals—and I have never seen the man who is not at least my equal. I have done as they do,—when I was a fool. Then I did not know any better, now I do. Now they do not know any better; after a while they will. Every one acts according to his own nature. We are all in process of growth. From this standpoint one man is not better than another.—*Prabuddha Bharata*.

Renunciation and discrimination are the two wings. Know this—oh expert—the rise to the top of the house of liberation can not be accomplished without these two.—*Crest Jewel*.

UNPUBLISHED NOTES OF CLASS TALKS.

By Swami Vivekananda

THE greatest name man ever gave to God is Truth. Truth is the fruit of realization, therefore seek it within the soul. Get away from all books and forms and let your soul see its Self. "We are deluged and maddened by books," Sri Krishna declares. Be beyond the dualities of nature. The moment you think creed and form and ceremony the "be-all" and "end-all," then you are in bondage. Take part in them to help others, but take care they do not become a bondage. Religion is one, but its application must be various. Let each one, therefore, give his message, but find not the defects in other religions. You must come out from all form, if you would see the Light. Drink deep of the nectar of the knowledge of God. The man who realizes "I am He," though clad in rags, is happy. Go forth into the Eternal and come back with Eternal Energy. The slave goes out to search for Truth; he comes back free.

—*The Message of the East.*

The Truth is a living power for Good, indestructible and invincible. Those who fail to aspire for the Truth have missed the purpose of life. Hold fast to the Truth as a lamp. Seek salvation alone in Truth. Where self is, Truth cannot be; yet when Truth comes, self will disappear. Therefore let thy mind rest in the Truth, propagate the Truth, put thy whole will in it, and let it spread. In the Truth thou shalt live forever. Self is death and Truth is life. Trust in the Truth. Have faith in the Truth and live it.—*Buddha.*

IN THE HOURS OF MEDITATION

THE Voice of the Guru speaks in the inmost silence of the heart:—"My son, the Flesh wars constantly against the Spirit! Therefore be constantly on the alert. How hollow is life! Trust not the senses. These are swayed by pleasure and by pain. Go thou beyond! Thou art the Soul! At any moment the body may go! Indeed, who knows the hour! Therefore, keep thy vision fixed unalterably on the Ideal. Saturate thy mind with ennobling thoughts. Not in the hour of death, but in the hours of life keep thy mind free and pure. Then, if death overtake thee of a sudden, thou art prepared. Live thy life as though thou wert even now about to die. Then shalt thou truly live. Time is fleeting, but thou canst make eternity of time provided thou dost think eternal and immortal thoughts.

"When thy body goes down into death, certainly thou shalt repent *if* thou hast not lived the life of thy ideals here on earth. Ah! IF—that fatal word which spells neglect and remorse. Thousands are the spirits who lament, saying, 'O *if* I had only done so in the body, I would now be nearer to my God!' Therefore throw thy whole soul at this very moment with all the sincerity of thy being into the Ideal. Say, 'O God! *Make* me have the Vision of Thee! *Make* me sincere. *Make* me yearn for Thee!' Say to thyself every day that great prayer of all my devotees, 'Let me love Thee alone, O Lord.'

"The Spirit of Man is infinite. Infinite Power is at thy beck and call. Realize that thou art of the Soul of God. He breathes in thee; He lives in thee; He moves in thee; thou hast thy very being in Him. When this thou

dost realize, all fear shall drop off from thee. Thou shalt attain to the state of fearlessness."

And the soul, in response to the Voice of the Guru says, "O Lord! Thou Author of all things, Thy nature is Infinite Love! Thou art everywhere. O grant that I be possessed of this consciousness intensely. In all the worlds there is no hope but in Thee! Terror and the forms of death are everywhere. Pain and illusion are on all sides. Such is the vision of mortal life. But do thou remove the illusion! Then where death stalks and where life is pain I shall behold Thee! O let me behold Thee in the Terrible. O, Thou Destroyer of Illusion, hear my prayer!"

And the Voice of the Guru makes answer, "My son, call upon the Lord! Call always upon the Lord. Think of Him, and Him alone, and the Power that is Infinite shall surround thee, and the Love that is Infinite shall embrace thee, and He shall speak words of realization to thy soul. True dependence upon God solves all difficulties. The process of true Man-making is in complete resignation to the Supreme Love; it is manifest in uninterrupted meditation. When life is seen as fraud, when death is present, when the heart is wrung with agony, and human woe attains its climax,—remember, make thou the effort to remember that these things are of the body and that thou art the Soul. Take hold of each day as if it were thy last. Make *Japam* of it every moment of thy life. Daily consecrate thy life to God. See the Wisdom of His Will. And then even in the mouth of a tiger, even in the presence of death, even on the threshold of hell, thou shalt find God.

"If this be thy life's labour—to remember God—then a

great joy and a serene peace shall abide with thee, and that which seems gruesome shall become beautiful, and that which seems terrible shalt become all-loving. And with the saint, bitten by a cobra, thou shalt joyfully exclaim, 'Behold! Behold! A Messenger has come from my Beloved,' or with the saint, in the tiger's mouth, thou shalt call out 'Shivoham! Shivoham!' And this is the Strength of the Soul. This is verily its manifestation. This is the Spirit of the Divine—because it is the Perception of the Divine.

"The warrior rushes to the cannon's mouth in defense of the motherland. The mother rushes into fire and into water and into the tiger's mouth to save her child. The friend dies for the sake of his friend. The Sannyâsin bears all hardships for the sake of the Ideal. Do thou bear all trials, face all dangers, live the Life of Ideals and be brave and fearless *in the name of God*. Thou art my son. In death or in life, in sin or in virtue, in pleasure or in pain, in good or in evil, whithersoever thou goest, wheresoever thou art, I am with thee, I protect thee, I love thee. For I am bound to thee. My love for God makes me one with *thee*. I protect thee! I love thee! I am thy very Self. Child, thy heart is my abode!"

Hari Om Tat Sat!

—*Prabuddha Bharata*.

Him I call indeed a Brâhmana (one of consecrated life) whose knowledge is deep, who possesses wisdom, who knows the right way and the wrong; who has traversed this miry road, the world, difficult to pass, and its vanity; who is thoughtful, steadfast, free from doubts, free from attachment and content.—*The Dhammapada*.

NOTES OF INTEREST.

The Vedanta Society of New York has just entered upon a new chapter in its history. The former home of the Society on Eightieth street was given up at the end of June this year. New quarters were found which are in every respect admirably adapted to the needs of the work, and the location is one which appeals to all. For directly opposite is Central Park with its natural beauty, giving a view of shady trees, blossoming shrubs and green grass—a refreshing and restful outlook, one peculiarly fitting as an accompaniment to the study of the Vedanta, the teaching of which brings us so close to the thought of the "Motherhood of Nature."

The prospects for increased activity in the work are most encouraging. Not only because already many newcomers are attracted to the present Headquarters, but also because the workers are conscious of greater freedom and foresee a broadening field of usefulness.

The address of the New York Vedānta Society is 236 Central Park West. The Sunday Lectures are at 3 P.M. Tuesday evenings at 8 is the Gita Class. Wednesday afternoon 3—5 is Reception, when Swami Bodhanānda is glad to see those who call. Thursday evening at 8 is the Meditation Class for members, who are given practical instruction. The Library is open daily 11—4.

Assured of the cordial sympathy of all lovers of Vedānta, the New York Society looks forward with renewed energy and enthusiasm to the coming season's labor, laying their work and its fruits, as an offering of love, at the feet of the Lord.

No man is hurt but by himself.—*Diogenes.*

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THE GREAT MYSTERY OF THE UNIVERSE UNVEILED.

By the late Swami Trigunatita.



O Ardent Seekers of the Truth:
There are two meanings connected with that word mystery. Anything that is artful is mysterious; the other meaning covers whatever is beyond our conception, beyond our knowledge. The mystery which we meet with in this universe,—the ruling power, the ruling policy of nature,—is the great mystery, the great secret which we cannot solve. This afternoon we will try to understand how that mystery can be unveiled.

A halo is over all the face of Nature. If you look around you will find it. To discover a material law of Nature is childishness. We have the law of gravitation. If we ask you "Why does a thing fall to the earth?" you will be scientists and answer: "Why, the law of gravitation." That is not the answer. You simply evade the question.

The scientist talks about laws, and he means material laws. Can any of the scientists of this world say why we have come to this world? Why we live the life we are living? Why two and two make four and not five? That is mysterious,—we cannot solve that. Life and death cannot be solved. We see the plant growing, we see the sun moving. Why? If we sow a seed under

some circumstances, it will grow. But why does it grow? We cannot say.

We cannot discover all the laws that rule the organs within, nor can we discover all the laws of Nature outside. Your medical science has improved a great deal, it has discovered a great deal. Has it discovered any center of satisfaction? It has not. It cannot.

But are we to go on in this ignorance, this way, not being able to know anything in this universe? No! We have reason and sensibility. We are rational beings; we know how to argue. We are human beings; we know how to respond. We must strive to improve, to understand. We must die in the work; we must not give up. That is the aim of our life. That is the life of man.

This is a foreign land. We are simply living in this world. We have a home somewhere else, not here. It is great ignorance—dire ignorance—it is misery to be in this world. But when we fight like good soldiers our life is not misery: it ends in a happy death and we go to Heaven, full of light, full of knowledge, full of bliss, full of intelligence. Then we will know how everything is solved.

If we would find the solution of the mystery here, we must not give up. This is our purpose, this is our determination. How shall we solve that mystery, and of what kind is it? Mystery is in the form of a veil everywhere. Nowhere light, everywhere darkness, everywhere ignorance! If you search in the material world, or in physical science, if you are sensible people, you will find after a long struggle that you have done nothing; that you have wasted your energy and time. You waste for nothing the short life that you have come to

live in this world when you use it to gain material knowledge. Be ignorant of this world, and learn that the way is not this way, but the other way,—just in a contrary direction.

The scientist cannot solve the law of Nature, but to the spiritual minded the solution comes. Where there is satisfaction, there is the solution. Where there is restlessness, there is ignorance. If we can be quiet, calm, peaceful, satisfied, we are wise. What does that mean? It means that we are to know nothing. Our worldly knowledge is limited; the mystery of nature is solved in other than worldly ways, and the language to express that solution must be different from our language of this world. When we become spiritually minded, everything is solved. There is no more question,—it is just like a calm sea,—no more ignorance or doubtings; everything is lighted up. To such a mind as this comes eternal calmness.

We often speak of struggling against Nature,—fighting against Nature. Is it possible to fight against Nature? Nature is so great, how can we imagine that we can struggle against it? Can we gain control over Nature? Is not that a childish thought, a vain hope? No! Not to the spiritually minded. All the Scriptures of all nations proclaim in one voice: "There *does* come a time when we have full and complete control over Nature!" We rise high above Nature and beyond Nature.

You know Nature and God are two different things. Nature deals with this universe. She tries to keep us in this world. But we must progress, and are always, in some shape or other, striving more or less against Her.

We rule the sea: the vessels go from one shore to the

other. That is ruling Nature. The time will come when even highly educated persons—highly intellectual persons—will be spiritual. We say sometimes that the more intellectual we are, the more we read, the more agnostic and skeptical we become. But the wise person says this is not so; that there will come a time when understanding will come; that there is a stage in his eternal progress—simply one stage—when a man becomes a skeptic or agnostic.

You know the aim of science today is to discover one unit in everything. Religion says there is one God—the unit—and although the time has not come, it is very near, when material science will teach that there is nothing but God, and if we are not spiritual we will not be wise.

The nation that rises spiritually rises in civilization. When we talk of rising, we begin with matter; then we deal with physical science, or physiology; if we go further we talk of the mind and deal with mental science, or metaphysics; still further we deal with the Spirit that is over all and everything,—the world, the body, and the mind. Only spiritual science can unveil the mystery of the universe. It is not medical science or physical science that will let you know how Nature rules you and governs you. It is spiritual science by which you know this.

You may become highly advanced in spiritual life without reading medical science or any other science; we may know what is going on within us; we may know what is going on outside. We may know the whole law of Nature even if we do not know the science of life. To the spiritual person there remains no question unsolved. That is a fact. Even illiterate persons will un-

derstand. We have seen such instances in all countries. I once saw a person who didn't know any language. He couldn't understand English, he couldn't understand Latin, he couldn't understand Greek, he couldn't understand Sanscrit, he couldn't read a single book, but he could answer all scientific questions, all metaphysical questions, which cannot be solved by existing Scriptures. How did that person do it? Why, he was spiritually improved,—improved of the Spirit. If we improve our spirits, the veil of Nature will fall off; we will know what is going on,—what we are here for, and what will be.

Striving against Nature is one way to improve spiritually, and to go with Nature is another way. There are always two ways—to go with the current and to go against the current—either to rule Nature, or to be a slave to it. Nature is our mother. "O thou Mother, take away Thy veil that we may see Thy face over all the earth, we beseech, we pray thee." Still the veil is not taken away. But there will come a time when the veil will be taken away.

We have to be just like a child,—like a babe who knows nothing of this world, who knows not the purpose of life. The Mother takes particular care of such a babe. As we grow up, Mother neglects us,—does not take such pains. Why? Because we have learned to take care of ourselves. But that is an illusion. We cannot take care of ourselves. We do not know what we are or what we are for. If we do not know these things, how can we take care of ourselves? We cannot be what we should be if we do not know our mission, but will be all the time just like a baby. Your Mother will tell you to be so and so; to be like this and that. Let Mother speak

then. Don't think; don't talk much; don't be wise; let Mother speak,—let Mother talk. Mother will take care of us. If we do that way, then Mother one day will go a little way to help us to God. If we pray ardently, if we beseech, implore ardently, Mother out of Her kindness one day will let us pass through the veil of Nature, through the darkness. That is one way to God. The other way is to strive against Nature.

If we are hungry and do not eat anything, if we crave very much for something, if we are very prone to something that keeps us from God, and we deny ourselves, that is striving against Nature. If I want to see a beautiful rose every day, and do not look at it, but think there is nothing in it, no beauty in it at all, it will fade and the petals drop off—that is ruling Nature.

And how can these contradictory ways produce the same result? How? Because we know as a matter of fact that, although they are contradictory ways, opposite ways, so long as the desire is the same they come to the same center. There are many other ways, but these two are the principal ones, and both will take us to the same place.

Bhakti is intense love for God (or the Ideal); getting which, man becomes perfect, immortal and satisfied forever; getting which, man desires no more, does not become jealous of anything, does not take pleasure in vanities; knowing which, man becomes filled with spirituality, becomes calm and finds pleasure only in God. . . . Nārada gives these as the signs of love: "When all thoughts, all words, and all deeds are given up unto the Lord, and the least forgetfulness of God makes one intensely miserable, then love has begun.—*Narada-Bhakti-Sutras*."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

By the late Swami Trigunatita.

Ques. I would like to know how we can improve our spiritual nature?

Ans. By meditation. And by meditation, of course, I mean being calm; have a calm mind and try to think. If you think, being calm and quiet, then you will improve your spiritual life, and you will know the things that are necessary. The first thing that is most necessary is to be calm and to think,—free thinking. In dogmas, in Scriptures, in anything, be a free thinker. Be calm and think, and you will grow. Don't stop your progress, but grow and help people. We waste our energies being this and that, and we do not grow spiritually so quickly. If we be calm and be quiet and think, we can grow very quickly.

Ques. I would like to ask the speaker if he thinks that clairvoyancy, inspirational thinking and reading, and mesmerism are the result of natural law?

Ans. Yes; the result of natural law. Everything in this universe is the result of natural law because we cannot go beyond Nature. Everything comes out of natural law, but the question is whether we need healing and the like, to be spiritual.

Ques. Then if, according to the speaker's idea, clairvoyancy, mesmerism, and these different isms are the result of natural law, how shall we determine the real spiritual life? Or that which will lead us on to become spiritual? How are we to proceed to ask Nature to rend the veil?

Ans. We have explained the different isms and, if you will allow me, I will answer plainly. You know even

Vedanta, the highest religion, is called by some persons "Humbugism," so that is also an ism. So every ism is not a true thing. You know Nature stands in our way. The object of Nature is to keep us, to hold us back, not to let us go. That is the great law of Nature, the great mystery of Nature, and by that mysterious law everything is kept here in this universe. In every particle of motion you will find two contradictory forces striving, one to fly off and the other to fly towards the center. The solar system is kept in this way. Everything is trying by centrifugal force to fly off, and centripetal force keeps it back, holds it steady to the center. So the law of Nature keeps us here. When we try to grow spiritually—strive much—Nature comes with some temptation: temptations in the shape of good science, true art, and true practice. Nature brings us such things for spiritual thought. But "Not this, not this!" must be the motto of our life. "Not this:" never to be satisfied. You don't know what is what. Something may come in the shape of a very good thing and afterwards prove to be very bad and dangerous for our spiritual life. Vedantists—the highest free thinkers—think that these sciences and arts are temptations in spiritual life. They are not material temptations, or physical temptations, but spiritual temptations. So for a true spiritual growth, steady spiritual growth, we do not need all these things. We need simply God. Whatever comes to us, we must examine it to see whether it is God or not.

Ques. Do we have more than one material life?

Ans. Yes, we believe in reincarnation.

Ques. If, through various reincarnations, a man be-

comes perfected, will he not stand before men as a re-embodied Christ?

Ans. Yes.

Ques. You spoke of an illiterate person, who, being highly spiritual, knew many things. Was this person in a normal condition, or in a trance?

Ans. No, he was not in a trance.

Ques. Will you please explain "illumination?"

Ans. Everything is either material or spiritual. If it is spiritual illumination, there will be nothing to be solved. Every question will be solved in this illumination.

Ques. You spoke of two ways by which we could lift the veil of Nature from before us, either with Nature or against it; which would you think preferable?

Ans. I cannot say which way would suit you. If you want the easier way, it is to go with Nature.

Ques. Upon what authority do you claim reincarnation to be according to natural law?

Ans. That subject is a very intricate one, and we will deal with it separately, in a lecture, "What remains after death?"

When once you have conceived and determined your mission within your own soul let nought arrest your steps. Fulfil it with all your strength; fulfil it whether blest by love or visited by hate, whether strengthened by association with others, or in that sad solitude that almost always surrounds the martyrs of thought. The path is clear before you; you are cowards, unfaithful to your own future, if, in spite of sorrows and delusions, you do not pursue to the end.—*Mazzini.*

SAYINGS OF ŚRĪ RĀMAKṚISHŪA

¶ Q. What is the relation between the individual ego (Jivâtman) and the Supreme Spirit (Paramâtman)? A. As when a plank of wood is stretched across a current of water, the water seems to be divided into two, so the Indivisible appears divided into two by the limitations (Upâdhi) of Mâyâ. In fact they are one and the same.

¶ God is related to man as magnet is to iron. Why does not then God attract man? As iron thick imbedded in mud is not moved by the attraction of the magnet, so the soul thick imbedded in Mâyâ feels not the attraction of the Lord. But as when the mud is washed away with water the iron is free to move, so when the soul by constant tears of prayer and repentance washes away the mud of Mâyâ that makes it cleave to the earth, it is soon attracted by the Lord.

¶ So long as one is not blessed with the vision Divine, so long as the base metal is not turned into gold by touching the philosopher's stone, there will be the delusion of "I am the doer," and so long must there necessarily remain the idea of the distinction between "I have done this good work, and I have done that bad work." This idea of duality or distinction is the Mâyâ which is responsible for the continuance of the world current. By taking refuge in *Vidyamaya* (the Mâyâ having preponderance of *satva*), which follows the adoption of the right path, one can reach Him. He alone crosses the ocean of Mâyâ who comes face to face with God, who realizes Him. He is truly free, living even in this body, who knows that God is the doer and he is the non-doer.

WHAT IS VEDANTA?

By Swami Abhedananda.

MANY people have the erroneous idea that by Vedanta Philosophy is meant a philosophy confined exclusively to the Vedas, or Sacred Scriptures of India; but the term "Veda" in the present case is used to signify, not a book, but "wisdom," while "anta" means "end." Vedanta, therefore, implies literally "end of wisdom;" and the philosophy is called Vedanta because it explains what that end is and how it can be attained. All relative knowledge ends in the realization of the unity of the individual soul with the ultimate Truth of the universe. That ultimate reality is the universal Spirit. It is the infinite ocean of wisdom. As rivers running across thousands of miles ultimately end in the ocean, so the rivers of relative knowledge, flowing through the various stages of the phenomenal universe, ultimately end in the infinite ocean of existence, intelligence, bliss and love.

To realize this unity must be the aim of all true religions, but the religious history of the world shows that no other nation has ever at any period understood it so clearly, or preached it so boldly, as did the sages among the ancient Aryans who inhabited India. For nearly five thousand years, indeed, India has held in her bosom the sublime idea that "Truth is one, but the means of attaining it are many." In the Rig-Veda, the most ancient of all known Scriptures, we read, "That which exists is one, men call it by various names." The Jews call it Jehovah; the Christians, God or Father in Heaven; the Mohammedans worship it as Allah; the Buddhists, as Buddha; the Jains, as Jina; while the Hindus call it Brahman.

Upon this fundamental Truth rests the whole structure of Vedanta teaching and students of comparative religions are coming to recognize that, because more than any other religion or philosophy of the world it insists upon this doctrine of the unity of existence under a variety of names, it offers, as can no other, an adequate foundation for all the different phases of dualistic, qualified non-dualistic, and monistic systems of religious thought. Vedanta, indeed, may be said to establish a universal religion, which embraces all the special religions of the world.

This uniquely universal character, moreover, is still further emphasized by the fact that it is not built round any particular personality. Any religion or philosophy that depends for its authority on a specific personality can never satisfy the demands of a universal religion. In order to make a system of philosophy or religion universal, the first thing necessary is that it be absolutely impersonal. So long as there is a founder of a religion, so long is it limited by the personality of the founder, and cannot be universal, as we find in special religions like Christianity, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, and kindred faiths. The followers of each of these great religions, forgetting the principles, become attached to the personality of the founder and refuse to recognize any other; and this results in the discord, conflict, and persecution with which the pages of religious history are filled.

The system of Vedanta has many phases. The dualistic phase includes the fundamental principles of all the dualistic or monotheistic systems, such as Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and all systems that advocate the worship of the personal God, or devotion to any divine ideal.

The qualified non-dualistic phase embraces all the systems which teach the immanency and transcendency of God. It includes all such ideas as "God dwells in us as well as in the universe;" "We live and move and have our being in God;" "He is the soul of our souls;" "We are parts of one stupendous whole;" "We are the sons of God, the children of Immortal bliss," etc. But the monistic phase of Vedanta is the most sublime of all. Very few thinkers can appreciate the grandeur of spiritual oneness. Yet herein lies the solution of the deepest problems of science, philosophy, and metaphysics, and the final goal of all religions. It alone explains how it is possible to say, "I and my Father are one."

Vedanta is a system of religion as well as a system of philosophy. There are, it is true, many systems of philosophy in Greece and Germany, but none of them has succeeded in harmonizing itself with the religious ideals of the human mind; or has shown the path by which man can attain to God-consciousness and emancipation from the bondages of ignorance, selfishness, and all other imperfections, in so rational a way as has the Vedanta philosophy in India. It does not ask anybody to accept or believe anything which does not appeal to reason, or which is not in harmony with the laws of science, philosophy, and logic. But in India, it must be remembered, religion has never been separated from science, logic, or philosophy. As a consequence, Vedanta, ancient as it is, is none the less in strict accord with the ultimate conclusions of modern science, preaches the doctrine of evolution, and still has room left for all truths which may be discovered in future.

Another notable feature of Vedanta is that it does not

prescribe to all one special path by which to reach the ultimate goal of every religion. On the contrary, it recognizes the varying tendencies of different minds, and guides each along the way best suited to it. It classifies human tendencies into four grand divisions, which, together with their subdivisions, cover almost all classes of people; and then it sets forth the methods which may be helpful to every one. Each of these methods is called in Sanskrit "Yoga."

First is Karma Yoga. It is for the active man, for those who like to work and are always ready to do something for the help of others; in short, it is for the busy, every-day working man or woman. Karma Yoga teaches the secret of work, and tells us how we can turn our daily tasks into acts of worship, and thus reach perfection in this life through work and work alone. It is essentially practical and absolutely necessary for those who prefer an active career, for it will teach them how to accomplish a maximum of labor with a minimum loss of energy. The larger part of mental energy of the majority of people in this country is needlessly wasted by the constant rush of their daily lives, which is merely the result of lack of self-control. Did they know the secret of work they would not only avoid this waste, which is the cause of the many nervous disorders to which they are at present subject, but actually lengthen their days. Karma Yoga reveals this secret, and opens the way to complete self-mastery.

The next method is Bhakti Yoga. It is for such as are of an emotional nature. It teaches how ordinary emotions can bring forth spiritual unfoldment of the highest kind and lead to the realization of the ultimate ideal of

all religions. In a word, it is the path of devotion and love. It explains the nature of divine love and shows us how to turn human love into divine, and thus fulfil the purpose of life both here and hereafter.

The third is Raja Yoga—the path of concentration and meditation. The field of Raja Yoga is very vast. It covers the whole psychic plane and describes the processes by which the psychic powers are developed, such as thought-reading, clairvoyance, clairaudience, the evolving of finer perceptions, the going out of the body, the curing of disease through mental power, and performing all such acts as are ordinarily called miracles. All the psychic powers which were displayed by Jesus of Nazareth and his followers, and which are used to-day by Christian scientists, mental healers, faith healers, divine healers, and the various other kinds of healers, have been displayed from ancient times by the Yogis in India.

Raja Yoga takes these psychic powers and phenomena, classifies them, and makes a science out of them. It also teaches the science of breathing. The wonderful effects of breathing exercises on mind and body are not unknown to the mental healers of the West. If, however, Raja Yoga deals scientifically with the psychic powers, it does not cease to warn its students that the attainment of any of these powers is not a sign of spirituality. This is a great lesson which the mental healers and Christian scientists of this country especially will have to learn from the Yogis of India. Little brains and weak intellects easily turn away from the path of spiritual truth when some psychic power begins to manifest itself; and they think that they have reached the highest state of spirituality because they have the power to cure head-

ache or heartache. Raja Yoga, however, teaches that the exercise of psychic power and the making a profession of it are great obstacles in the path of spiritual advancement. Its principal aim, on the contrary, is to lead the student, through concentration and meditation, to the highest state of super-consciousness, where the individual soul communes with the universal Spirit and realizes the unity of existence, eternal peace, and happiness.

Jnana Yoga is the fourth method. It is the path of right knowledge and discrimination. This is for those who are intellectual, discriminative, and of a philosophical nature. Thus we can see in some slight degree how universal is the scope of Vedanta. It also explains the fundamental principles of spiritualism; tells us how the soul exists after death and under what conditions; what kind of souls can communicate with us, and what becomes of them afterwards; how the earth-bound souls, being subject to the law of karma or causation, reincarnate on this earth, taking human form again and again. It explains the science of souls; and it expounded the law of correspondences ages before Swedenborg was born.

The religion of Vedanta accepts the teachings of all the great spiritual teachers of the world, recognizes them as Incarnations of Divine Spirit, and has room for those who are yet to come for the good of humanity.

Vedanta explains the basis of ethics. Why should we be moral? Not because some one has said this or that; not because it is written in a certain chapter of a certain scripture, but because of the spiritual oneness of the universe. If you injure another, you injure yourself. If you are wicked, you not only do harm to yourself but also to others. It also explains through this spiritual oneness

why we should love our neighbor as ourselves, because in spirit we are already one with that neighbor.

The ethics of Vedanta bring peace and harmony to the religious world. Wherever Vedanta reigns, religious toleration and cooperation among all sects prevail, and religious persecution ceases forever.

A student of Vedanta does not belong to any sect, creed or denomination. He is neither a Christian, nor a Mohammedan, nor a Buddhist, nor a Jain, nor a Hindu; yet in principles he is one with all. He can go to a church or a mosque or a temple. He is a follower of that nameless and formless Eternal Religion, which underlies all the special religions of the world; and as he grows into a deeper and deeper understanding of this universal religion, he cannot but declare, as did Professor Max Muller, "Vedanta has room for almost every religion; nay it embraces them." And so it must, because its whole teaching is based on those all-inclusive words of the Blessed Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita:

"Whosoever comes to me through whatsoever path, I reach him; all men are struggling in the paths which ultimately lead to Me, the Eternal Truth."

Can there be anything more winning to the soul, anything that brings a deeper shame to you, than to have it revealed to you, suddenly or slowly, that from the first day that you came into this world nay, before your life was an uttered fact in this world, God has been loving you, and seeking you, and planning for you, and making every effort that He could make in consistency with the free will with which He endowed you from the center of His own life, that you might become His and therefore might become truly yourself?—*Phillips Brooks*.

IN THE HOURS OF MEDITATION

THE Voice of God, speaking, saith in the Quiet Hour, "Remember, ever remember, 'Only the pure in heart see God!' Purity is the first requisite. Even as they who are governed by desire are intense therein in their passions, even so be thou pure; even so, do thou have a passionate longing for purity! Search deeply and steadfastly for purity. It alone availeth. Call to thy mind that great prayer of My servant, Prahlada, unto Me, 'O Lord, that same intensity of love that worldly people have for the fleeting objects of the senses, give to me that same intensity of love for Thee!' Purity is the ante-chamber to the Lord's Presence. Before thou thinkest of the Lord, think of purity. Purity is the key by which the doors of meditation that lead into the Abiding-Place of the Most High are opened.

"Throw thyself upon the Ocean of My Strength. Strive not! Seek not! *Know* that I AM. This knowledge, added with complete resignation unto My Will, shall save thee. Have thou no fears! Art thou not in Me! Am I not in thee! Know thou that all this passes, which men deem so great. Death is everywhere, swallowing up the forms of life. Death and change ensnare and bind all things—save the Spirit. Know this! Purity is the method of this knowledge. It is the foundation-ground. With purity come fearlessness, freedom and the realization on thy part of thine own nature, the reality of which I AM.

"Let the tempest blow, but when desire burns and the mind vacillates—then, **THEN** call upon Me! I shall hear. For, as My servant hath said, I hear even the foot-

fall of an ant. And I shall speed unto thee. I do not desert them who call upon Me sincerely. Call upon Me, not only sincerely, but steadfastly, as well.

"I am not the universe: I am the *Spirit* beyond it! The universe is as a carcase unto Me. I am concerned with the SOUL alone. Be not deceived by the external magnitude of things. Divinity is not in form, nor yet in thought. It is the purified, free, spiritual, blissful, form-emancipated, thought-emancipated consciousness which knows not, nor can know any stain or sin or bondage or limitation. Within the innermost that art thou, O Soul. Realization shall come to thee with regard to this. It must. For such is the Sure Goal of the Soul's life. Remember, remember I am with thee! I am with thee! I, the Lord, am with thee! I am as Strength to all thy weakness; I am as Forgiveness to all thy sins; I am as Love to all thy search for thee! I am thy Self! I am thy Self! Put off all other thoughts of Self! For in the thought that thy Self is in any wise different from the Self of Me lies all ignorance and all weakness. Arise, thou Shining One, know that I am thy Self! I am thy Self!

"And purity is the pathway to My Presence! Herein is thy Salvation! Hari! Om Tat Sat! Peace! Peace! Peace!"

—*Prabuddha Bhārata*.

He who hates no creature and is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from attachment and egotism, equal-minded in pleasure and pain, and forgiving, who is ever content and meditative, self-subjugated and possessed with firm conviction, with mind and intellect dedicated to Me, he who is thus devoted to Me is dear to Me.—*Bhagavad-Gita*.

CURRENT NEWS.

Through the courtesy of Dr. E. H. Grove, acting head of the Los Angeles Vedanta Society, we are in receipt of the following account of the visit to Los Angeles of Swami Paramananda, of Boston:

Swami Paramananda arrived in Los Angeles August 19, 1915. During his stay of about two weeks he delivered six public lectures—four in Los Angeles, all well attended—and two in Long Beach. He also gave four private talks at the home of the president of the Society and one at the residence of a former disciple of the late Swami Vivekananda.

The Swami was very much beloved by all who had the privilege of meeting him. There were many requests for him to prolong his stay, but his duties at the Vedanta Center in Boston precluded any further extension of his absence. Before his departure, however, the Swami promised to visit the Pacific Coast again in the near future.

Copies of the third and latest edition of Swami Abhedananda's well known pamphlet, "The Religion of the Hindus," have been received and may be had by applying at the book stall in the Hindu Temple. Price 10 cents. Postage 1 cent.

Having realized Him (the Supreme) by means of superior austerity and with a pure mind and heart, the sage will never again approach death. Hence the wise declare the act of "Surrendering one's self to the Lord" to be higher than all austerities.—*Taittiriya-Upanishad*.

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JESUS OF NAZARETH FROM THE HINDU STANDPOINT.

By the late Swami Trigunatita.



S that Christianity which has come down to us today, which condemns other religions of the world, which has the exclusive right of giving salvation to humanity,—is that Christianity our subject to-night? No. "Jesus of Nazareth from the Hindu Standpoint." Does it mean that we Hindus are going to discard or disregard the Christian faith, the Christian Bible, or Christ? No. Or does it mean that Hinduism is going to give a new explanation to the Bible, or to the Christian religion, or to Christ? No: it is going to explain in its true character, in its true light, the religion of Christianity, the life of Christ. It is not that no Christian has ever been able to understand the life of Christ or the religion of Christianity and therefore Hinduism steps forward to give you the explanation; but rather to give you a firmer faith, a truer, stronger explanation: to show to you what true Christianity is and what Christ really is.

"Jesus of Nazareth from the Hindu Standpoint." There are so many Christian brethren around us; take any one of them,—he will laugh at the subject. The Christian life of Jesus of Nazareth is to be explained by Hinduism! What is Hinduism? Hinduism is a religion of prejudices and superstitions. Hinduism is a system of idolatry, is

paganism. How can Hinduism explain a true religion, such a religion as Christianity which has no sin? There is no idea of sin in Christianity, but according to our modern brethren all the systems of Hinduism are full of sin: the lives of the Hindu prophets, etc., are full of sin; Jesus led a pure life and he is the Savior of humanity. How can such Hinduism explain Christianity? How can impurity explain purity? How can bondage lead people to salvation?

It is true that Hindus are very idolatrous, and Hinduism is full of superstitions and prejudices. It is true; but, at the same time, it was Hinduism which gave birth to a system of philosophy farther than which no other philosophy can go. What is that? Vedantism, of which you have just come to know a little now-a-days. Vedantism is just a branch of Hinduism, one spark of that great Aryan religion, the religion of the forefathers of all the human race, the system which, if once taken up, you will never be able to give up if you are an ardent seeker after truth. Hinduism is full of prejudices and superstitions—at the same time, it is the mother of Vedantism, which alone leads you to the truth. It is not that Vedantism is the only way to salvation, the only way that can lead us to the truth, but any person in any country, in any age, in any condition of life, if he be a real seeker after truth, is a true Vedantist. No matter by what way, by what method you carry on your religious culture—be you a Christian, be you a Mohammedan, be you a Buddhist—so long as you are a sincere seeker after truth, you are a great Vedantist, you belong to Hinduism. Hinduism is your religion.

Hindus do worship idols; at the same time, Hindus

openly declare to all people that these very idols and superstitions are nothing but stages on the way,—in the beginning of our growth. They are nothing but symbols. Without symbols, without concrete ideas, we cannot form an abstract idea of things; but the higher we rise, the further we will go beyond the region of superstitions and prejudices and idolatry. Who can be more idolatrous than a person who worships the material objects of the world for material culture? If a person, on the other hand, worships a piece of stone or a piece of wood, with a view to obtain the light, to gain knowledge, to discover the truth, to attain the highest salvation,—is he an idolator? In the beginning, when he was a child in his spiritual life, he might have been full of superstitions and prejudices, owing to his ignorance. He belonged to the primary class of his institution; he could not rise higher, he could not be promoted to the higher class until he learned, with the help of those symbols, with the help of those concrete ideas. Young boys and girls learn, in their childhood, how to conduct themselves in their future grown-up life: the boys dressing themselves in overalls, with tools for carpentry and other things, and the girls putting on the apron or skirt of their mothers, learning to keep house. Are those superstitions or prejudices? They are useless, they are playthings, it is true. The Hindus have so many superstitions and prejudices, so many idols to worship. Why do they worship their idols? With a view to gain worldly prosperity? They do, sometimes, but at the same time they know that is a lower culture. You go to any village, where no education has been introduced of whatsoever kind, and ask any villager, young or old, man or woman,

and you will be told, "Yes, there is a higher culture along spiritual lines, where we do not use worship of idols; these prejudices and superstitions are simply symbols, helps." As in algebra we make the symbols "a," "b," and "c" represent big sums, to shorten them for our convenience, so we train our minds for the spiritual life with so many prejudices and superstitions. We have already so many material, worldly superstitions and prejudices, which we cannot give up, and poison is killed only by poison. We bring in spiritual prejudices and superstitions to kill these material superstitions and prejudices. We are but babies in the spiritual life. We have to train ourselves. Unless we have some symbols, we cannot understand the abstract idea of God. We are imperfect yet. We are but mortal beings, full of defects. Our ideas have not yet been developed properly. We take the help of these symbols to lead us through this ignorant state.

We have already told you that Hinduism is a great thing in the religious world. It is a very ancient trunk of the tree of religion, and from that trunk extend many branches. Each branch is for a certain class of people, for a certain mode of mind, and so forth. There are many sinners in the world. You, our Christian brethren, will not accept them in your church. You will say, "you have already gone to damnation, no more God for you." You have selected a few and only these will be saved. But Hinduism, although, as represented by you, a system of idolatry, full of superstitions and prejudices, has outspread its arms, full of blessings to all classes of people; no matter where they are, no matter what they do, no matter what kind of life they lead, Hinduism gives shel-

ter to all classes of people. Some of the branches of that ancient trunk of the tree of religion are meant for sinners, for those poor brethren who think they have lost all their opportunity for spiritual culture. God is the common father; if He be the only creator, the sinner has also been created by Him, and He, the Father, must show a little light to him. Does ordinary Christianity give light to sinners? Even if you baptize him, some of your denominations say that no amount of baptism can save him.

Although Hinduism, as represented to you, is full of so many prejudices and superstitions, still at the same time, as you know, the Vedas are the highest scriptures of Hinduism. As a matter of fact, the Vedas are the original, the primeval scriptures of all the religions of the world, from the historical point of view. Read the history of the world; the history of the languages of the world; the history of the ancient civilization of the whole world, and you will discover, will understand clearly that the Vedas are the earliest literature. And what kind of literature? Spiritual—the highest spiritual—the highest culture of the human mind. If you study even the English translations of the Vedas, which you can get anywhere, you will understand that the highest culture, the highest production of the human brain, has been recorded in the Vedas. You will be proud of such a literature, and that you still have the Vedas in the world and that you belong to the Aryan race, whose scriptures were the Vedas.

Some portions of the Vedas are full of rites and ceremonies, forms of worship, the several kinds of sacrifices, etc. Yet at the same time, they tell you, whether you

be Hindu or Christian, "Go ahead, rise higher and higher and still higher. The human mind is infinite; the region, the scope, is infinite; rise higher and higher, still higher, until you go beyond the region even of these Vedas, of these superstitions and prejudices." Even a prayer or the very abstract idea of God is a prejudice at one stage of your spiritual life. You cannot name God, you cannot express God by name or form. You will be lost in that big Infinite Ocean of Godhead, and then where will be the Vedas? The Vedas, which before you used to revere so very much—those very Vedas will come and extol you, the gods and goddesses will come down from heaven to worship you. That is what Hinduism says. That is what Hinduism preaches. It being so very extensive it embraces all classes of people, prescribes the remedies for all kinds of diseases, mental and spiritual, does not exclude any brother, any sister in the world. We need prejudices and superstitions and idolatry. From that point of view, from such a Hindu standpoint, we are going to explain the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

"Jesus of Nazareth" is our subject. Why don't we say "Jesus, the Christ?" By the word "Christ" you mean Savior, but you may take it in a figurative sense. Do the Hindus take Jesus Christ in that light? No. Although the Hindus believe in prejudices and superstitions and idolatry, still at the same time, as we have just said, they are constantly trying with all their might to go beyond these, and the Hindus believe in Jesus, the Christ, literally as well as figuratively. All the meanings of the word "Jesus" and the "Christ," and his life, his doctrines, and the Bible, all the stages, all the faiths, all the doctrines, are truly literally believed in by the Hindus. The Hin-

dus say: Jesus was and ever is the son of God, nay, the incarnation of God. We do not, any of us, know truly, although some of us try to know, to understand a little, the meaning of the expression "son of God;" but before we understand the meaning of the expression "son of God" do we know the meaning of the word "God?" In a few words, very briefly speaking, "God" means the Almighty; the highest ideas that the human mind and brain can form are placed in a substance or in a being called God. And incarnation of God means, God, the almighty, all powerful; God, possessing so many powers to infinite extent,—*that* God comes to live in a mortal body. That is incarnation of God. God is born as a human being; but it is not like the incarnation of a human being, who when he dies may be born again,—if you believe in rebirth. Whether you believe in rebirth or not, your way anyway is clear, so long as you know the purpose of your life; so long as you can understand your own motive, your own object, you are safe, if you simply be an ardent, sincere seeker of Truth.

Incarnation of God means God come down in flesh and blood. Is it possible? You are a searcher after truth. You want to verify everything. You are not expected to take up any doctrine blindly, otherwise you will be an idolator. If you accept any doctrine, any principle, religious or otherwise, because others have believed in it, what will be your position? Nothing but idolatrous, nothing but full of prejudices and superstitions. Blind faith can never lead you to the light. If you simply be baptized and accept Christ as your Savior, will you be saved? The Hindus ask you to touch your heart with your own hand and feel what you believe within.

Do not go by the Bible. Do not go by what you hear from the ministers or from the church. Try to know yourself, your own position. Will your baptism and acceptance of Christ as your Savior be able to save you? No. If you are a true and steady practitioner in the Christian faith (you know what practitioner means—a student who wants to realize the truth in practical life), will your baptism, will the faith—the ordinary, common faith, the blind faith, the Biblical faith, the Church faith—in the Christ, be able to save you? The Hindu says, no: unless you realize yourself, no Bible, no doctrine, no amount of baptism can ever save you from going backward.

Incarnation of God means God come down in flesh and blood. Does He come from heaven? What is the idea—we won't say the definition, for we cannot define God, nor can we ever describe God—but a certain partial idea of God that we have, what is that? God is almighty, all-powerful, all-pervading. God is in everything. God is here and there, etc. Say what you mean. If you do not mean it, do not say it. Say that you do not believe in this doctrine or that doctrine. Say that you do not believe that God is all-pervading because you have not realized it yet. If you want to progress in this way, first you will take certain doctrines for granted and then you will start in your life to verify those doctrines, whether they are true or not. In the course of your spiritual practices you will be able to understand their truth or error. Then you accept the doctrine and follow accordingly. If you accept the doctrine that God is all-pervading, follow accordingly. If you accept the doctrine that God is all-powerful, in every step you take up in your spiritual culture, believe that doctrine. God, being almighty, can do anything, can do any miracle. That is one of the phases of God's position, or of our meaning of the word "God."

(Concluded in the January Number.)

SAYINGS OF SRĪ RĀMAKṚISHŪA

¶ Like unto a miser that longeth after gold, let thy heart pant after Him.

¶ As a lamp does not burn without oil, so man cannot live without God.

¶ The magnetic needle always points towards the North, and hence it is that the sailing vessel does not lose her course. So long as the heart of man is directed towards God, he cannot be lost in the ocean of worldliness.

¶ Men weep rivers of tears because a son is not born to them, others wear away their hearts with sorrow because they cannot get riches. But how many are there who weep and sorrow because they have not seen God? He finds who seeks Him; he who with intense longing weeps for God has found God.

¶ The loadstone rock hidden under the sea attracts the ship sailing over it, draws out all its iron nails, separates plank from plank, and sinks the vessel into the sea. Even so, when the magnet of God-consciousness attracts the human soul, it destroys in a moment man's sense of earthly personality and selfishness and plunges the soul into the ocean of God's Infinite Love.

¶ As the child beseeches its mother with importunities for toys and pice, weeping and teasing her, so he who knows God to be his nearest and dearest, his own, and who like an innocent child weeps inwardly with earnestness to see Him, is rewarded at last with the vision of Divine Beauty. God can no longer remain hidden from such an earnest and importunate seeker after Him.

GITÂ CLASS LESSONS.

By the late Swami Trigunatita

WE will first speak of the effect of reading and studying the Gitâ. What does the study of the Gitâ produce in our life? Let us turn to the Preface. This is not to be found in some editions, but perhaps you will find it in the translation of Annie Besant. It speaks of the glory and efficacy of the Gitâ.

Verse 3 of the Preface: "Where is the book of the Gitâ, where its reading is performed, there are all holy places, there indeed Prayâga and the rest."

Whoever meditates on the verses contained in this Scripture, no matter what great sins he may have committed, they will not be able to touch his heart or his system. As you put a drop of water on the lotus leaf and the water cannot penetrate the leaf and will not soak into it, so whoever studies the Gitâ will be able to work properly, without being attached to his work, without worrying over it or caring for the result of it. Such a person will not be able to commit sin or a wrong act, but, should he previously have done so, the effect of it will be destroyed. Why? Because he meditates on the teachings inculcated in the Gitâ.

Very few people in India are learned in a literary way, but most of them are spiritual, although they have no literary education and cannot even read and write. Perhaps one per cent. of the women in India can read and write, but ninety per cent. of the women are very spiritual, practically spiritual, so much so that if you give them a copy of the Gitâ, they will take it into their hands and reverently bow down to it, uttering the name Gitâ,

Gītā, Gītā, Gītā, etc. They know the name and have heard what the Gītā is and, to some extent, what it teaches, and since they cannot read the contents, they repeat the name. What effect do we notice? They invoke the effect of the study of the Gītā, and, as a matter of fact, when they repeat the name Gītā, Gītā, Gītā, it turns into the reverse from right to left and becomes "tagi" which means a renouncer of all work or of the results of work, a sacrificer, an unselfish person, one who has renounced his own will and is resigned to the will of God.

That is real meditation on the Gītā, which produces its effect in practical life. Merely reading from a literary standpoint will not produce the effect. There are many scholars of Gītā, who can explain it in many different ways, but show no effect of Gītā in their practical life : that is to say, they do not meditate properly on what is taught therein. Wherever the Gītā is taught and explained, read and learned, the persons who listen need not go on a pilgrimage nor perform any hard asceticisms, because where there is the study of Gītā, there is produced the effect of pilgrimage and asceticism. Whatever can be produced by asceticism can be produced by understanding what the Gītā teaches. All the followers of God, those who live in and with God, all the sages, gods and goddesses, all the deities, all the prophets, come to listen wherever the Gītā is read, taught and explained. The Gītā contains such great things, great lessons. Whenever the study of the Gītā is started, help can be received very soon. He who may happen to be despondent in any affair of life will get great help and consolation and peace if he listens to the Gītā. He will be in the com-

pany of all the gods and goddesses, so to say. We do not see these beings, we cannot see them, but we have heard from sages, from those who have had their wisdom eyes opened, that they can be seen. We have merely to believe in their words.

Metaphorically expressed, the student of the Gîtâ listens with gods and goddesses, sages and prophets, with those who live with God, and those who did live with incarnations of God; born sages, sages who are alive for eternity, who never die, who have, literally speaking, eternal life. Consequently, if we listen and read in a meditative mood, we get help from them. Many persons believe that by merely hearing from others of the teachings of the sages, they will receive help from invisible beings. There is some truth in that. Whenever the Gîtâ was read, or when some one was asked to read it, our Master used to see those higher beings, and he sometimes conversed with them in a peculiar language, which none could understand. He would afterward relate to us the story. They came in their subtle bodies, and he explained to them in symbolical language as though he were a bird or some other being. We could not understand a single word or letter of what he was saying.

Those who can receive power do receive it. By spiritual culture our senses become so keen, susceptible and sensitive (in the highest sense of the word) and through these senses we can perceive these higher beings and the help we get is immense for us. But in the beginning we do not feel any such experience. A child who has never tasted butter will never know how it tastes simply from your description. So, now in the beginning, it may

be that we do not perceive the existence of such power and the efficacy of the study of the Gītā, but later on by cultivation, by constant study, by close application, we come to feel the heavenly presence, the presence of higher beings. Some might take this in a poetic, romantic or imaginary sense, but even so, that imagination and poetic explanation is very helpful and tends to produce good influence. Whatever gives help is welcome. Thinking of God is nothing but poetry, nothing but imagination in the beginning. God is great, God is glorious, infinite, almighty, etc.; all these are nothing but unmeaning words to us now, but by cultivation we gradually come to a full understanding of them.

Why can we not put questions? Because we do not study. Because we do not take this culture as part of our life, as a necessity of and for our life, as we do our eating, drinking, sleeping and taking care of the body in so many different ways. Can we not take the study of the Gītā as part of our bodily necessity? Out of twenty-four hours, how long do we take as a part of our regular duty, routine work, the study of the Gītā for our lesson, for assimilation? How much our senses enjoy a little eating! How much do we enjoy and feel every word of the Gītā? One spoonful or one forkful of food produces so much enjoyment to the palate. When we see how many words of Gītā can produce as much enjoyment as these acts of daily life, eating and drinking, we can understand at what stage of life we now are. If we are one hour late in going to bed, how disturbed we feel, how our heads ache, and if we be five minutes later than nine o'clock, we try to get out of our reading it. If this is the case in the church, what will it be at home?

Those who make the Gîtâ a part of their life will find it a great source of consolation, a great means for success, if we believe in success. We do not believe in higher powers, but when we find material help is of no avail, if we are wise, we will have recourse to higher help. Supernatural agency can help us, and then, too, let us employ the mind, for mind can do many things. Let us try to find out if there is any supernatural agency that can help us, and you will see. "Knock and it shall be opened to you." We do not know how to knock; we do not feel the necessity for knocking. How can we get that power of knocking at the door so that the door will open to us? "Ask and ye shall receive." Pray. Our prayer is not heard, our reading does not produce any good. Meditation, instead of producing any good, leads us astray and brings all kinds of disturbances, because it has not been done properly; and instead of correcting ourselves, we would give it up. Is that right?

If you go to India to-day, where there is so much of Western materialism and superficiality (comparatively we can say that India is full of materialism—no more the kind of culture, study and realization of twenty-five years ago, or even ten years ago), every year it has been advancing so much in materialism—still, if you go there, you will find that those who are troubled in mind, body, business or politics, first try material helps; but if these fail, immediately they arrange in quite a different way to change their affairs and surroundings. They employ Brahmins and priests and begin reading scriptures, offering objects of sacrifice, making the whole atmosphere quite different. And the surroundings cannot but be, in a few days, different from what they were; if it is done

with sincerity of purpose, that thought force must produce effect. We have seen personally in many homes where there has been trouble or danger, which was not averted, when readings from the Gītā or any such Scripture were commenced conditions immediately improved. Even if seemingly no effect was produced, still there was a certain sense of peace: a peace which enabled them to keep their balance and be able to take up their work again, without despondency. They learned to resign themselves to His will, and to understand that this is a law which must produce effect for the good of all. That knowledge is the effect which is invaluable. When we cannot avert danger, we can, at least, get the invaluable knowledge and peace which we could not receive in ordinary culture of the Scriptures, because in times of danger, or any crisis, the mind is in a peculiar state,—a state in which it becomes indifferent, in a way, to the external world. At such times can be planted seeds of the highest truth. If this higher culture be performed during that time, it produces greater effect. That knowledge is seldom forgotten.

Those who have studied the Gītā understand that every word of it has great meaning, a practical meaning, and they pity those who miss such great things.

"Wherever there is culture of the Gītā or argumentation of the doctrines of Gītā, and wherever the Gītā is read by oneself or to a body of people, or where it is listened to, there" the Lord Himself says, "is My abode." "There I," the Lord says, "for a certainty. Arjuna, I will tell you the truth, I live there. I cannot quit that place, it is so pleasing to Me."

Every verse in these chapters is full of meaning. If you study the Gītā attentively, closely, then you will understand all religions and your own life to some extent, at least.

UNPUBLISHED NOTES OF CLASS TALKS.

By Swami Vivekananda

THE Vedic sacrificial altar was the origin of Geometry. The invocation of the Devas or bright ones was the basis of worship. The idea is that one invoked is helped and helps.

Hymns are not only words of praise but words of power being pronounced with right attitude of mind.

Heavens are only other states of existence with added senses and heightened powers.

All higher bodies also are subject to disintegration as is the physical. Death comes to all forms of bodies in this and other lives. Devas are also mortal and can only give enjoyment.

Behind all Devas there is the Unit Being,—God, as behind this body there is something higher that feels and sees.

The powers of Creation, Preservation and Destruction of the Universe, and the attributes such as omnipresence, omniscience and omnipotence, make God of gods.

"Hear ye children of Immortality! Hear ye Devas who live in higher spheres! I have found out a ray beyond all darkness, beyond all doubt. I have found the Ancient One." The way to this is contained in the Upanishads.

On earth we die. In heaven we die. In the highest heaven we die. It is only when we reach God that we attain life and become immortal.

The Upanishads treat of this alone. Upanishad's is the pure path. Many manners, customs and local illusions cannot be understood to-day. Through them, however, Truth becomes clear. Heavens and Earth are all thrown off in order to come to Light.

IN THE HOURS OF MEDITATION.

THE Soul, speaking further in the times of meditation sayeth unto itself,—

"True, the hour of trial cometh and human weakness is great; but then the very knowledge that sin is weakness will in time destroy it. For when once thou knowest poison, naturally thou wilt abhor it. When thou knowest thy weakness it shall be weakness. Thou hast laid bare the heart of thy trouble and that which is the Depth in thee will alter the currents of its movement. In time thou shalt conquer—so long as the heart is sincere. And pray steadfastly, for constant vigilance of soul is required in the spiritual struggle. Now and then moments will come when thou shalt have insight into thy real nature and thou shalt know weakness as weakness. In that time call upon the Lord and He, heeding thy prayer, shall give thee Grace.

"Theory is one thing and life another. Realize, that no matter how wonderful thy intellectual awareness of truth may be—man-making is the goal. Realization is all in all. The beast in thee is strong; but it can be tamed down by sincere prayer. Prayer is the one thing. Only prayer can conquer lust. Nothing is greater than the name of God. *Constant Vigilance* be thy motto and *Constant Prayer*. And they who are the Helpers, the Messengers of the Most High, shall come and thou shalt be free! Indeed, long is the way, but the end is sure! Prayer goes deep; it eats out the vitals of temptation. Pray, pray,—pray constantly, pray always. And be not discouraged in the evil hour; be not discouraged when thou dost fall. God is always near. He knows thy woe

and thy sincerity, but never leave off calling upon Him! Even in thy sin be strong in prayer. From out the depth of prayer, all things come—love for God, spiritual vision and spiritual realization. Take thy stand upon the thought that God is All-powerful and that His nature is that of the good shepherd who guides His sheep *especially* when they go astray. Know that before God is Author of Justice, He is Love Itself. Do thou but ask and it shall be given unto thee; do thou but seek and thou shalt find; do thou but knock and it shall be opened unto thee. Make but the feeblest effort; even that shall build thee up into the kingdom of righteousness.

"Aye, every prayer which thou utterest, each rising of thy heart unto God shall be added unto thee, giving thee strength. Thy prayers shall make thee whole. Depend on prayer! It is the means. However dark thy heart, prayer shall bring light therein, for prayer *is* meditation; prayer in itself *is* vision. Prayer is communion with the Almighty. It links thee with Omnipotence and Supreme Love. It lends wings to thy soul. Even if thou art in the mire, thou shalt rise. Even if mountain-loads of iniquity have fallen upon thee and have buried every vestige of thy spirituality, prayer will raise thee up. And from the depths God will hear thee and His Love and Power shall be made manifest unto thee, and thou shalt be lifted up as a testimony of the works of the Most High. And thou shalt sing a song, magnifying God Who is thy Savior. And thine own heart shall testify to the greatness of the Mercy of the Lord; and all who have ever known thee shall say, "Lo! He hath become a saint!" Verily, His Mercy is His Justice and His Mercy endureth forever and ever. Hold on to prayer!

No matter how numerous the temptations that assail thee as enemies, by prayer thou shalt build a fortress about thy nature and it shall be impregnable. Aye, even the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it! For God shall have bound thee unto Him by the strong cords of Love and Realization that come of prayer!! Hari Om Tat Sat!

—*Brahuddha Bharata.*

CURRENT NEWS.

The following circular-letter has been issued by the San Francisco Vedanta Society:—

THE HINDU TEMPLE,
2963 Webster St., San Francisco, Calif.

November 16, 1915.

Dear Friend:

As you most likely know, the title to the Temple and other property held in the name of the Swami Trigunatita has been in litigation in the Superior Court of the State of California, in and for the City and County of San Francisco, Department 14 thereof. By order of the Judge of said Court, we have been directed to call a meeting of all who have paid dues to the San Francisco Vedanta Society and who have contributed to the building and alteration of the Temple, in order that a permanent Board of Trustees (3) be elected.

In accordance with that order a meeting of all interested in the Vedanta Philosophy, who have in any way contributed to the support of the work in the past, has been called for 8:30 o'clock, Monday evening, November 22, 1915, at the Auditorium of the Hindu Temple, 2115 Filbert Street, San Francisco, Calif.

At that time three trustees will be elected to hold office for such terms as may be deemed wise, who will be recommended to the Court as the proper parties to hold title to and manage the Temple and other properties of the Society.

Trusting that you will be able to be present I am

Yours in the Infinite,

Bertha E. Petersen,

Secretary.

ANNOUNCEMENT.

The President of the Ramakrishna Mission Brotherhood (Belur Math), and the Vedanta movement all over the world, has asked Swami Prakashananda to succeed the deceased Swami Trigunatita as the spiritual head of the Hindu Temple (S. F. Vedanta Society). The latter has been advised to immediately take charge of the services and other functions of the Temple, to superintend the management of the "Voice of Freedom," and also to try to unite all the local centers of the Vedanta movement. Thus instructed, the Swami has already commenced giving lectures at the Hindu Temple on Sunday evenings, and is trying his best to merge the Pacific Vedanta Center and S. F. Vedanta Society. This consolidation and establishment of a bigger and stronger Vedanta Society, by uniting and bringing together all the scattered forces, will bring about a new era in the history of the Vedanta movement on the Pacific Coast. Swami Prakashananda takes this opportunity to thank on behalf of the Brotherhood all those who have been instrumental in upholding the cause of Vedanta, and requests all interested in the spread of the broad and universal teachings of Vedanta to join hands by sinking their differences and help him build up this broad and strong organization.

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

From the beginning of December, 1915, the Pacific Vedanta Center and the San Francisco Vedanta Society will be merged into one society to be known as the Vedanta Society of San Francisco.

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Voice of Freedom

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION FOR THE
GROWTH OF ALL PHASES OF HUMAN LIFE



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No. 10

JESUS OF NAZARETH FROM THE HINDU STANDPOINT

By the late Swami Trigunatita

(Continued from the December Number)



WHAT is man? God is all-powerful; God is infinite, with infinite knowledge and wisdom, and God is all-pervading; and what is man? Man is a little, tiny substance, a mortal being with limited knowledge, full of mistakes, etc.; and how can man, with this limited knowledge that he has, understand the steps that God takes to rule His universe? Who can say when and how, and how long an earthquake will last? Can you discover? Who can say when and how and why a meteor will fall? Can you understand the method, the way in which God rules His universe? His wisdom, His knowledge is infinite.

Say what you mean. If you do not mean it, do not say it. And if you take a doctrine for granted, follow it in every step of your life. God is almighty. He can do any miracle. He can be born as a human being. A human being has some understanding, some consciousness, some reasonable feelings, etc., but God can, if He wishes, come down even into an inanimate object. Will you be able to understand His existence therein? You can. When? Not now. When you will attain that knowledge, His infinite knowledge, it is then that you will be able to understand the Infinite.

First be the Infinite, then you will understand the Infinite. Can any logician contradict the statement that God, being almighty, can go into an inanimate object, far from speaking of a human form? What will be your logical grounds? All the religions of the world are based on logic and science, if we know how to explain them, and it is only Vedanta that can explain that all the religions of the world are founded on logic and science.

Hinduism, in spite of its faults and defects, prejudices and superstitions and idolatrous methods, gives such a great scope to all religions and the votaries of those religions. If you be a Christian and if you cannot understand your own faith, come and embrace Vedantism. Vedantism comes from "vive," to know. It will give you a full knowledge of your faith. It is not a sectarian doctrine. Do not be afraid. If you be a searcher after truth, proclaim that you are so, no matter by what way you go. Stand against the world; no matter. If by this way you can attain the truth, you must, you should.

God, being almighty, can come down and take a human form. In all religions, in all ages, if you read the history of all the religions of the world, you will find there are so many incarnations of God, so many prophets, so many saints. We have to use minor terms. If we say incarnation of God, if we say son of God, we poor vain beings may not be able to grasp; but if we say prophets, wise men or teachers, if we say seers of the truth, we may. Hinduism believes in all these doctrines, not only the Christ, but in every other prophet of the world.

Let us take Jesus of Nazareth, meaning the historical Jesus. Now one point—we are trying to go along the

path of logic and reason, but we abuse those doctrines of logic. We become too much of a logician, and we say, who tells us that Christ had historical existence? Who tells you that on such and such a date such and such event happened? You may say, history. Well, there are many other histories. There are many such events in the world, on which different historians hold different opinions. But you may say, our spiritual life, our most important culture does not depend on those points. Those points of history can be neglected, but when we are going to accept Christ as our Savior, how can we believe in Him if He had no historical existence? Come to Hinduism and you will understand, you will get peace and consolation, you will get a satisfactory explanation. It is not that if you cannot believe in the historical Jesus, you will not be saved. It is not that you will not be a true Christian. You will be the truest of the true Christians, if you simply try to have faith in Jesus. That is the beginning of Christian life. According to that view of Hinduism regarding Christianity, regarding the life of Christ, if you be skeptical regarding His historical existence, try to understand whether He had historical existence or not. Not from historical evidence, because you have already denied history on that point, but try to understand by yourself. In what way? Do you believe in God? You are going to try to believe in Jesus, the incarnation of God, but that means that you have already believed, to the extent of your might or spiritual strength, in God. If you have believed a little in God, pray to Him,—"God show me, reveal to me whether Jesus had historical existence or not." Hinduism says you will get light. No matter whether you be

in the wilderness or in the midst of the churches, no matter whether you are well versed in the Bible or very ignorant and illiterate, you will get the light, and so much light that no Christian will be able to stand before you in point of faith. Hinduism says, go on praying by yourself in your own way. God is all-knowing; He knows every person's way. The mother knows all the secrets by which the baby's life is to be moulded or to be formed. And God knows. Pray to Him, the very source of light, the very source of knowledge, and He will satisfy you. You will get the truth; you will understand whether Jesus had historical existence or not.

Leaving that skeptical idea and taking for granted that Jesus had historical existence, those who have a little faith, a little prejudice, a little superstition, a little idolatrous turn of mind, for them and to them, Hinduism says, take it for granted and make your life easier. The mother says, do not work so hard, I will do something for you and save you trouble. You do just what you can. Take it for granted that Jesus has historical existence. The next doubt that will come to your mind—the most important of all doubts in Christian life, or at least in the life of those who are trying to be Christians—is the birth, the immaculate birth of Christ. How is it possible that a virgin can give birth to a child, and how can it be possible that a child born in that way can be an ideal of purity? That is a suspicious case. In that very condition was thrown Joseph, who was more responsible than any one of us. Joseph doubted the moral character of his pure wife. But in a dream an angel appeared before him and told him to take up the virgin as his wife and to entertain no doubt in his mind on that point, and

Joseph could not but believe. Divine power, divine agency is ever unfailing. That was divine agency by which Joseph could believe in Mary.

Another point—whether God can and does come in that way. If God is almighty, why did He not come to make the way of His children clearer and easier? Jesus of Nazareth was born in a mysterious way. Why not? Can a mortal being be the father of that immortal soul? Can an impure mind be the cause of the birth of a pure mind? Impurity can never produce purity. God has to come down to us in His own way, not in a mortal way. It is the birth of God, not of man. It will ever remain a mystery so long as you do not understand the truth. Only then will you understand that Jesus, the Christ, is truly the "Son of God."

Hindus believe in Jesus both literally and figuratively. What is the meaning of Jesus? J-e-s-u-s: that is the spelling of the word. How do you pronounce it? Jesus. And what is the corresponding Sanskrit word? Ishaha. We have that very word, "Ishaha," meaning God, almighty God. It means a being, say God, possessing so many powers.

Thus in "Ishaha" we have one word for "Jesus," according to Sanskrit literature. And then Christ. Christ can be more easily explained. It is nothing but Krista, a Bengali word, which is a direct branch of Sanskrit. What is the English meaning of the English word Christ? Savior. What is the meaning of the Sanskrit word Kṛishṇa? Savior. Kṛishṇa means, He who plows the land for us, prepares the field for the crop. Another meaning is, He who takes away all our sins and impurities.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

By the late Swami Trigunatita

Ques. According to Vedanta, Swami, does Jesus of Nazareth live now as a separate entity from God?

Ans. As we have already said, Hinduism is a very extensive system of religion, or rather, a system which is the mother of many systems of religion. No matter in what way you believe in Jesus, whether he once existed as the Son of God, or is still existing, or will exist forever, or if you need other faiths for your culture, God will supply you and you will get those faiths in time. Hinduism gives full scope, full liberty to spiritual growth. Spiritual growth is a matter of natural growth, not of dictation by others. You will grow, but by your own self. That is natural growth, and that is what we mean by spiritual growth. So, if you wish to be a Christian, try to have faith; pray to God and He will give you the proper faith, that faith which you need for your culture.

Ques. Well, are not certain things true, regardless of our attitude towards them? The fact that I believe or not does not make it true. Are they not true in themselves?

Ans. One thing is true to me. It is a matter of education. Hinduism is full of prejudices and superstitions, etc., at the same time, it wants to discard all of them. How will it be able to do so, unless you give full scope? If I say to you, that Jesus does live forever as the Son of God, as our Savior, will you be able to believe in it? Our belief is not a matter of blind faith, but is a natural growth. How can you take up the truth that has been discovered or realized by another person for your own spiritual culture? I do not know to what denomination

you belong. If I had known you, I could have answered your question; but I do not know you, and I do not dare and do not like to give my faith to you. Because you will grow by yourself, and God is your master and teacher, not I. I may do something, if not much, a little to help you. I mean to say, a friend, any friend can help us, but just as a matter of help, as the gardener helps the growth of a tree. But if the tree is not to grow, no amount of putting soil and water to the tree will be able to make it grow. So, leaving aside others' doings, others' faiths, let us try to take up our own faith; let us understand our own situation, our own position, our own nature, where we stand. Let us understand that, and as soon as we understand that,—that is the germ, that is the beginning of our growth; from there we will grow by ourselves. If I tell you that Jesus is ever living as the Son of God, what good does that do to you? That kind of faith we do not want, any one of us, for our spiritual culture. Spiritual culture means the endeavor to discover the truth, and you must yourself be the discoverer of the truth. If I give you my discovery, that will not help you. Take your own faith, no matter what it is. Take the faith that you have from your own church. Take the faith that you get from reading your own Bible. Go ahead along that line sincerely and you will understand what He is, whether He lives forever or just once.

Take half-an-hour in the morning, and another half hour in the afternoon, to repair the inroads which the world makes; and, in the course of the day, make use of such thoughts as touch you most, to renew yourself in the Presence of God.—*Fenelon*.

SAYINGS OF ŚRĪ RĀMAKRISHŪA

¶ Verily, verily, I say unto you that he who yearns for God finds Him.

¶ He finds God quickest whose yearning and concentration are greatest.

¶ What offering is required to attain to God? To find God, thou must offer Him thy body, mind, and riches.

¶ What is the nature of the union of the Jivâtman (human soul) and the Paramâtman (Supreme Spirit)? It is like the union of the hour and the minute hands at twelve o'clock.

¶ Verily, verily, I say unto thee, he who longs for Him, finds Him. Go and verify this in thine own life; try for three consecutive days with genuine earnestness and thou art sure to succeed.

¶ "I must attain perfection in this life, yea, in three days I must find God; nay, with a single utterance of His name I will draw Him unto me." With such a violent love the Lord is attracted soon. The lukewarm lovers take ages to go to Him, if at all.

¶ A thief enters a dark room and feels the various articles therein. He lays his hand upon a table, perhaps, and saying "Not this," passes on; he comes in contact with some other article—a chair, perhaps—and again saying "Not this," he continues his search, till leaving article after article, he finally lays his hand on the box containing the treasure; then he exclaims, "It is here," and there his search ends. Such is indeed the search after Brahman.

ORIGIN AND IMPORT OF CASTE

By *Swami Bodhananda*

FOUR powers predominate in the life of every well-regulated society and civilization:—religion, politics, capital and labor. The upholder of religion is called the priest, of politics, the warrior or statesman; of capital, the merchant, and of labor, the servant. These four elements in more or less stratified form constitute what is commonly called caste.

According to the prevalence in greater or less degree of the three natural qualities, *sattva* (goodness), *rajas* (passion), and *tamas* (darkness), in man, the four castes are present at all times, everywhere, in all civilized societies. History bears testimony to this fact. Among the ancient Greeks there were two social strata, aristocracy and democracy; among the Romans, patricians and plebians; and so with all races, ancient as well as modern. This number and supremacy vary at different times, as well as in different countries, according to the various environmental conditions.

The term *caste* requires a little explanation. It is a Portuguese word, and was applied from about the middle of the sixteenth century by rough Portuguese sailors to certain divisions of Indian (Hindu) society, which had struck their fancy. It had before been used in the sense of breed or stock, originally in the sense of a pure and unmixed breed. The word that the Hindus use for it is *varna*, meaning color. The members of the four divisions into which the Hindu society was organized had four distinct complexions—white, yellow, brown and dark.

In India caste has a two-fold significance—social and

racial. As a social institution, it is based upon the economic principle of division of labor. In other words, the different social divisions or strata are nothing but guilds or unions arranged according to the varying culture and capacity of the people. Each division has its special function or occupation to perform. To prevent all confusion and encroachment and preserve the integrity of the assigned offices and occupations, these divisions are exclusive from each other as distinct classes or communities, but never hostile to each other with opposing ideals. They are all bound up together by the common interest of the well-being and advancement of the society. No man was ever debarred from religion because of his low profession. All people have equal rights to religion; while there exist these different classes, no class privileges have ever been allowed to exist except in certain unavoidable social matters.

THE RACIAL SIGNIFICANCE

In the early days the Aryans migrated to India from somewhere in the North, fought against those who were already in possession of that country and conquered and subdued them. These Aryans were obviously a powerful and intellectual people, and as soon as they became pre-eminent in position in this new home, they organized themselves into a regulative social polity of their own. Thus we have in India the Aryan settlers on one side, and the native inhabitants on the other. These Aryans again become divided into three strata, namely:—(1) the priestly aristocracy—the Brahmans; (2) the fighting or ruling aristocracy—the Kshatriyas; (3) the commercial aristocracy—the Vaishyas. To the very last these three great divisions: Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas

shared certain privileges and duties in common. The native inhabitants, who became submissive to their conquerors, the Aryans, formed the plebian stratum, called Sudras (servants), while the races of indigenous origin who remained hostile to the end were classed as altogether outside the pale of political society. The three aristocratic classes were called *Dwija* (twice born), and were not only allowed, but were obliged to be educated in Vedic literature and to pass through the four Ashramas, or stages of life. While the division into Aryans and non-Aryans (Sudras) was due to descent (i. e. social).

Now let us look at the true position of the three sections of aristocracy, as well as the plebian section in ancient India, and look also at the nature of the functions which were assigned to them. The Brahmanical caste was held responsible for the maintenance of learning and religion, and for the teaching of whatever was valuable as an element of culture or discipline to all the three originally Aryan castes. The Kshatriya was responsible for the maintenance of peace and order in society, and for the achievement of all such progress as depended upon war, and upon the due exercise of political authority. It is clear that the work for which the priestly caste was made responsible, and the work for which the warrior caste was made responsible were both intended to serve the common good of the community as a whole. There were restrictions placed upon the life of both these castes, with the object of preventing them from prostituting their power and position for class advantage or self-aggrandisement.

The Brahman was religiously enjoined to be always contented and to lead the life of poverty and purity in

preference to the life of luxury and plenty. The Kshatriya had to discard ease and indolence, and to be ever active and generous, so that all his wealth and power and achievements of heroism went to serve the good of the community of which he had become guardian by birth-right. Here was a responsibility which certainly was not calculated to make either the Brahman or the Kshatriya work for self-aggrandisement. All commercial, agricultural and pastoral duties were entrusted to the Vaishya. He was to go from country to country to buy and sell the industrial and agricultural products. A considerable part of his income was to go to the general improvement of his country and people. The Sudra was the common servant of the three higher castes.

The original caste was a qualitative system, though it may have, in certain parts, acquired an hereditary character later. Krishna, one of the greatest religious teachers in India, says that the fourfold caste is eternal and exists among all men, according to the distribution and combination of energies and qualities. It may be more than amply demonstrated that men's duties are determined for them by the potentialities and qualities of their own nature. Accordingly it is the duty of the man, in whose nature the sattva-guna (quality of goodness or rhythm, i. e., serenity and control) prevails, to live the spiritual life; he in whose nature the raja-guna (quality of activity or passion) or the tama-guna (quality of darkness or inertia) prevails to live the rajas (active) or tamas (idle) form of life, as the case may be. It is easy enough then to understand that the source of the Kshatriya's nature is the mixed quality of goodness and activity; the source of the Vaishya's nature is that of activity

and darkness or dullness; the source of the Sudra's nature is the quality of unmixed darkness.

Nature is the tendency in living beings acquired in the past births, and manifesting itself in the present birth by way of being ready to yield to effects; and this nature is the source of gunas (qualities). The duties (actions) of the four castes are divided according to the qualities born of nature. All such duties as require for their performance tranquility, self-control, self-restraint, patience, straightforwardness, knowledge, wisdom and faith are Brahmanical in nature. That is, those who are born with the fitness to develop and manifest these characteristics in a marked way are all entitled to live the Brahmanical life. Similarly, heroism, valor, courage, skillfulness, cleverness, firmness in battle, and masterfulness are declared to be the natural virtues which fit one for living the life of the Kshatriya. Agriculture, cattle growing and commerce constitute the life work of the Vaishya by nature, and physical labors and personal services form the function in life of all those who are by nature fitted to be Sudras. The philosopher, the soldier, the wealth-producer, and the servant laborer are thus considered to be the typical representations of the different kinds of functions which have to be performed for maintaining the welfare of society, and it is evident that the qualifications required for the proper discharge of these various kinds of functions themselves, that each out of the four sets of typical qualifications, as classified by implication or open expression in the *Gītā*, can enable its owner to live only a particular kind of a life well. Therefore the duty which is determined for one by one's own nature is one's own duty; while that other duty, which is deter-

mined for another by his different nature, is another's duty.

In the last chapter of the Gītā it has been clearly declared by Kṛishṇa that the man who is devoted to his own duties attains perfection sooner, even if these are ill performed, than another's duty well performed, and that no man can ever come to harm by doing the work which is determined for him by his own nature. Thus we see the original caste system was founded upon the principle of social economy, and shaped according to the native born qualities and capacities of men, and all the great Hindu teachers took cognizance of caste by quality and action only. But in course of time this principle of caste fell into disuse, as every good custom does, and hereditary caste came into existence.

It is quite evident, then, that some among the castes did violate the obligations of these wisely planned rules of life, and become unduly selfish and degenerate, which gave rise to the hereditary caste. It has been declared in all the Hindu Scriptures that a Brahman by neglecting his appointed duties degrades himself to the level of the Sudra, while a Sudra, by performing his duties rightly, elevates himself to the rank of the Brahman. There are innumerable instances of this fact in the history of ancient India. Most of the religious teachers were of the non-Brahman castes. The son of a Brahman should not be recognized as a Brahman, according to the canons of Manu and Yagnyavalaya, unless he possesses the virtues necessary for Brahmanness. The ideal Brahmanness is that in which worldliness is altogether absent, and knowledge and wisdom abundantly present. This has been the ideal of the Hindu races for all ages. A Brahman is

not amenable to law, nor is he governed by anybody. He is moral and good by nature. Why should he require any law for guidance? Why should he be under any government? The police, the constabulary, the military are needed for those who are weak and wicked. We read in the Mahabharata that the whole world was in the beginning peopled with Brahmans, and as they began to degenerate they became divided into different castes, and that when the circle turns around they will go back to the Brahmanical again, to raise humanity slowly and gently toward that realization of that great ideal of the spiritual man who is calm, steady, worshipful, pure and meditative.

(To be continued)

You all say there is a God and that He is an Omnipresent Being. Close your eyes and think what He is. What do you find? Either you are thinking, in bringing the idea of Omnipresence in your mind, of the sea or an expanse of meadow, or such things as you have seen in your life. If that is so, you do not mean anything by Omnipresent God; it has no meaning at all to you. So with every other attribute of God. What idea have we of omnipotence or omniscience? We have none. Religion is realizing, and I will call you a worshipper of God when you have become able to realize the Idea. Before that it is the spelling of words and no more. It is this power of realization that makes religion; no amount of doctrines or philosophies, or ethical books, that you may have stuffed into your brain will matter much,—only what you *are*, and what you have *realized*.

—*Swami Vivekananda.*

GITĀ CLASS LESSONS

By the late Swami Trigunatila

THE Bhagavad Gitā is a book of 18 chapters, each one called a Yoga or a discourse on a certain method of God-realization. The word Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit root *yog*, which means to join, just as the word yoke means to join. These words have been derived from the same root. In the Gitā the word Yoga means success in work—achievement. There are two elements in work, one physical, the other mental; physical ability and mental non-attachment. Every work should be done well and unselfishly.

Śrī Kṛishṇa says in the Gitā, "Equanimity of mind is Yoga; equability of mind in both success and failure is Yoga; that balance or poise of mind that cannot be disturbed by external conditions is Yoga." The end of Yoga is, therefore, the attainment of peace, rest and poise—the normal condition. Ordinary individuals are not in that normal state of mind, but by practice of Yoga that normal state is regained, so the principal meaning of the word Yoga is achievement. Patanjali gives another meaning of the word Yoga: the restraint of the mind from transformations. Mind in its ordinary state is like the ruffled, agitated surface of a lake, and by the practice of concentration the waves that disturb the surface become quieted and calm. Śrī Rāmakṛishṇa used to compare the mind of the ordinary person to a bundle of mustard seeds scattered over the floor. When scattered they are very hard to gather together. Even so is the control of the mind. It is very very difficult to control. By the constant practice of concentration and meditation

and introspection the mind can be quieted and controlled.

In each chapter Śrī Kṛishṇa tells of a certain method of Self-realization—God-realization. The second chapter goes by the name of Sankhya-Yoga, the philosophy that goes by that name; it is the theory of the conduct of philosophy. In this chapter Śrī Kṛishṇa tells the theoretical side of His grand philosophy of conduct. The second chapter is, therefore, the basis or ground work of the sublime advice or philosophy of conduct. It is, therefore, the most important chapter of the whole book. We will begin with verse 12, but first will speak of one word in verse 10. That word is very significant:—smile. Why did Śrī Kṛishṇa smile at that trying situation? Arjuna's heart was overwhelmed with grief and fear and he asked Śrī Kṛishṇa that he might not have to fight and offered many reasons why he should not fight. You know what his reasons were.

"He, the Ruler of senses, sat smiling while Arjuna sat mourning between the two armies." Why did he smile on that serious occasion? The commentators give two reasons. Śrī Kṛishṇa was the teacher of Arjuna and it is the duty of the teacher to make himself agreeable to the student. If he shows any temper and becomes angry when the student is obstinate, the teacher does not produce the effect he desires and the student is not open to him. In order to make his teachings tell Śrī Kṛishṇa smiled, but His smile was the offspring of love. Out of love He smiled. If He had shown temper, then Arjuna would not have been open to him. In order that Arjuna might open his heart to Him Śrī Kṛishṇa smiled. Another reason is that Śrī Kṛishṇa smiled because he was conscious of Arjuna's cock-sure weakness. Arjuna was

nervous, as all of us are nervous when asked to do anything we are not practiced in. Arjuna did not practice fighting very much and when he came to the field of battle he naturally felt nervous; but Kṛishṇa knew he had strength in him and was a great hero, and also knowing the past and the future knew that Arjuna was to win, therefore he smiled at that cock-sure weakness of Arjuna.

Verse 12: "It is not that you, I, and all of these rulers of men did not exist before; it is not, again, that we shall not all of us exist hereafter."

In this verse the doctrine of the immortality of the soul and reincarnation of the soul is conclusively proved. To believe in the immortality of the soul is to believe in the reincarnation of the soul. The soul is not immortal in one life, because this body is born, decays and dies. If the soul is immortal it must have existed before the body and will exist after the body; therefore, Arjuna, do not be grieved. We all existed in the eternal past and we all shall exist in the future. Do not, therefore mourn for your friends and relatives. If you happen to kill them in battle, you will kill only their physical bodies, the material part of their existence; the real part of their existence—the soul—is indestructible. You can do no harm to the soul. We all existed before as individual persons and we shall exist again as individual persons. As the embodied soul has, in this body, childhood youth, and old age, even so has it death. The wise are not deluded. Death to the wise is like a doorway between two rooms. By means of this door we can go from this Auditorium to the hallway beyond: so by means of death the wise pass through one incarnation to another, and they are not deluded because they know that the soul is immortal and that death is only a gateway between two rooms, as it were. Sensations of heat, cold, pleasure and pain, etc., are caused by the contact of the senses with their object.

CURRENT NEWS

The seventh anniveisary of the Vedanta Centre of Boston will be celebrated at its new headquarters at 1 Queensbury Street, January fifth, nineteen hundred and sixteen.

Swami Abhedananda of India, the well known teacher of spiritual philosophy and disciple of Śrī Rāmakṛishṇa, has opened a Vedanta Center at 232 S. Hill St., Los Angeles. Daily noon meetings, Tuesday evening class lectures on Practical Spiritual Living and Thursday evening Meditation classes for students only, as well as Sunday lectures, at 2:30 P. M., are given. Monthly contributions for the support of the work entitles students to free admission to classes and to individual instruction. Students wishing to continue under the direction of Swami Abhedananda are requested to register.

Notwithstanding the many vicissitudes through which the San Francisco Vedanta Society has lately passed, the Sunday meetings and weekly meditation classes were conducted even in the absence of a Swami by a few earnest and faithful students. Through the indefatigable efforts and unremitting zeal of Mr. and Mrs. Petersen and a few devoted souls, the case which has been pending in the Superior Court of the State of California for about a year has been won in favor of the Temple, and the Court has given the final decree by appointing three trustees—Messrs. C. F. Petersen, H. O. A. Bartl and T. J. Allan. Moreover, the local centers have now been united and consolidated into one big and broad Society under the religious leadership of Swami Prakashananda.

The Swami is giving two public lectures every Sunday at 11 A. M. and 7:45 P. M., and holding Tuesday Gītā

classes and Thursday Meditation classes at 8 P. M. for the members, who also get private lessons from the Swami.

In response to a question as to his attitude towards national preparedness, put to Swami Abhedananda by a reporter in Minneapolis recently, where the Swami stopped to lecture on his way to Los Angeles, he related the story of the snake and the sage which is well known to all students of Oriental literature:

"A snake dwelt by the side of the road, and bit everyone who passed. One day a sage came that way and the snake rushed forward to bite him as was his habit.

"The sage commanded the snake to stop. He told the snake he could not bite him, and his will power prevailed. Then he told the snake he must bite no more people who passed that way. He pointed out the error in his ways, and the snake bowed and went back into the tall grass that lined the road.

"But soon, how pitiful was his plight! The boys who used to run away from him now came and threw sticks and stones at him. He was nearly dead when the sage next came that way. He came forth and said to the sage:

"I have followed your teaching, and see the condition I am in. When I do not bite, the boys beat me and throw stones at me."

"You have not followed my full teaching," replied the sage. "I told you not to bite, that is true, but I did not tell you not to hiss. If you had hissed they would not have attacked you."

Vedanta is older than any of the world religions, Abhedananda explained in telling of his belief. Translated literally, it means "the end of wisdom." It disagrees with the fundamental principles of none, according to its advocates, and is the philosophy of the Christian faith.

It includes the doctrine of nonresistance, but Abhedananda said no one country can put the theory into practice now without being enslaved. "That is the trouble with Bryan's teaching," he said.

"The race is not developed enough for it now, but it is an ideal. The war may hasten the time when the whole world accepts it."

Incidentally, the Swami predicted that should the United States follow the theories of William Jennings Bryan it would find itself in the position occupied by India today.

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No. 11

THE GREAT PROPHET OF THE 19TH CENTURY—LIFE OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

By the late Swami Trigunatita



OH LORD, Thou art One; philosophers represent Thee variously. Thou art the ear of the ear; Thou art the speech of the speech; Thou art the mind of the mind; Thou art the life of all life. Thou art my life; Thou art the life of all this universe. Thou art inside, here; Thou art outside, there; Thou art everywhere. Thou art greater than the great. Thou art the primeval cause. Thou art the Creator of the creator. Thou art ever exhaustless. Thou art the unmanifested, Thou art the manifested, and Thou art that which is beyond all that is manifested and unmanifested. No water can moisten Thee, oh Lord, no fire can burn Thee, no weapon can harm Thee, nor can the wind drive Thee. Thou livest everywhere, here and there, inside and outside. Still some say Thou art far, far away, unapproachable and unknowable, but Thou, oh Lord, oh God, Thou art my beloved. Thou art the nearest of the near. Thou art very near. Thou art inside, Thou art outside.

This is the form of worship, from which stepped out to the world a young idolater, a little heathen, a black Hindu. Nobody knew him. Nobody could know him. Silently he went away from here. We are going to speak a few words on that great messenger of truth.

Under the name of Gadadhar, he was born in 1833, in a little village, the inhabitants of which gained their livelihood by tilling the soil. His parents were very poor in material things, but in the most important things,—the culture of the Self and deep religious feeling—they were very rich. That little family did not care for worldly prosperity. Belonging to the Brahmin caste—the highest in India—they were supposed to cultivate the Self, to devote themselves to religious practices, to teach, but nothing else.

The boy was sent to school, to learn what the teachers had to tell, but in a very few days he understood that that kind of learning would not give him the truth for which his life was meant. He understood this at the early age of five, and said to his parents, "I am not meant to earn bread and butter in this world, I am meant for higher things. Others will look out for me. God has created me, God will give me food. Who has brought me to this world? Who has given me this life? God. God will sustain this life. When God thinks it is time, He will take me away from here."

We think we are taking care of ourselves: that is because *we* are ignorant. But that little boy was a born sage. *He* understood from the moment he came into this world what his mission was, so he gave up worldly education and commenced to study higher subjects. Where could he go for higher knowledge? Wherever he went, in the world, he found a-b-c-d, he found 1-2-3-4. Wherever he went he found good or bad, money, men and women. Wherever he went he found nothing but worldliness. He could not find the place to get *his* kind of education.

A few years passed and he left his home and came to the city, Calcutta, where he thought he would find some higher help. He wanted to get some positive light by the practice of certain religious exercises. He felt the necessity of going in a methodical way. But he could not find anyone in the city able to teach him. Afterwards, he was appointed as a priest in a big temple near Calcutta. Belonging to the Brahmin priestly caste, he was eligible to the priesthood. There he worshipped an idol, the image of Mother Kali.

Some people in India worship Mother Kali as the embodiment of the great creative faculty—not only creative faculty (you know in everything there is trinity)—but preservative and destructive as well. Destructive does not mean death, but liberation. Creation—that is birth. Preservation—that is bondage, our life. And liberation, the great salvation, unity with Him from Whom we have come. That is the image of Mother Kali. He was appointed to worship that idol of Mother Kali. He used to worship first, as the religious rite dictates, with flowers, sandal-wood, incense, food, water, etc. But the image did not eat the food, did not drink the water, nor accept the flowers. Everything was left there as it was, nothing was diminished.

The young boy learned the mantram, the prayer which was used in offering those objects; he knew its meaning. He did not just repeat the words as the ordinary priests do in every country. He was of special make. He was made especially for some special purpose. He could not do anything without understanding the meaning of it. After meditation, he found all the objects of offering there as they had been placed. He thought

that was strange. He had meant that food for Mother Kali and She ought to have eaten it. He commenced praying, praying, praying, meditating and meditating, deeper and deeper; he went to this person and that person and asked why were his offerings not accepted? They said, those offerings cannot be accepted externally. If you are sincere, God will accept them internally and you will feel, you will understand that. But the poor boy's mind was not satisfied. He thought that if he worshipped that image as God, God should appear; that if he offered anything to God, God must accept it in every sense, internally and externally. If God did not do so with others, he should do it with Him. He said he would not let God go without accepting his offerings. The brave soldier! Do or die, he had to succeed! His purpose must be fulfilled. He had to get the full effect of his work, to know that his offerings, his worship, were accepted. He left the temple. He was still a young boy. He did not know where to go. He thought that he would enter into the deep forest and be merged in deep meditation and practice hard yogas. But some voice within told him: if there is such a thing as God, then He must be everywhere. So he commenced practicing alone in the very garden of the temple. That garden is a very large, spacious compound, covering several acres of land, and with big buildings and many temples. And in a secluded place in the garden he commenced to practice yoga. He had all time at his command. He did not care what he ate nor what he put on. Hunger of the body is not as important as the hunger of the soul and he was hungry in spirit for the Spirit. He cared for *that* kind of food, for *that* kind of drink, for *that*

kind of clothing. Along what line would he practice? Simply speaking, simply thinking, simply sitting would not do. Practice is quite different from study; practicing means putting into practical life. You imbibe certain thoughts and ideas until your actions are nothing but the reflection of those ideas and thoughts. That is practice. We practice so many things, but we do not learn many, especially about religion. Practicing religion is very difficult, very hard to understand, very hard to perform. He thought of having a guru, a spiritual teacher, who would show him the proper way. As we have already heard, he never had before in his life any teacher to satisfy his soul, and he could not at that time get any teacher. There were many experienced teachers, but all their teaching fell short of his capacity. He used to say now and then to them, "I want to know more; that everybody knows; that I know. I want to know something beyond that, which will satisfy my soul." He saw many persons coming to the Temple and shedding many tears and giving expression to their feelings of devotion, but he wanted something still beyond, which would satisfy his thirsty soul. God does not reveal Himself when we look outside for Him. His outside aspect is far, far distant. The nearest of the near is inside and if we want to see God sooner we must look inside.

Some force, some power, some tendency, some inclination, dictated to him to sit quiet and to meditate. He did that. There was no other way open to him but that. When *we* sit quiet, we simply close our eyes, but we are not even physically quiet. We cough, we move, we swallow, and we do this and that, and many external

things torment us. Internally the mind cannot be made to be quiet. That is against its nature. It is not built that way. It goes here and there and everywhere without any purpose. The mind is enslaved, but God has given us a little power of control so that we may get and keep that mind under our sway. That controlling power that we have from our birth is to be developed. That boy used to sit quiet; the external world used to vanish and he became merged in deep meditation. We often speak of meditation. What is meditation? Thinking of God. We have not seen God. We have heard of Him. Can we believe what we have heard? Everything is doubtful, full of questions. If we meditate properly, doubts will become less. That is the kind of meditation that we should practice. It is not beyond our power.

(Concluded in the March Number)

As there are Sattva, Rajas and Tamas,—one or other of these Gunas more or less,—in every man, so the qualities which make a Brāhman, Kshatriya, Vaishya or a Sudra are inherent in every man, more or less. But at times one or other of these qualities predominates in him in varying degrees and is manifested accordingly. Take a man in his different pursuits, for example: when he is engaged in serving another for pay, he is in Sudrahood; when he is busy transacting some piece of business for profit, on his own account, he is a Vaishya; when he fights to right wrongs, then the qualities of a Kshatriya come out in him; and when he meditates on God, or passes his time in conversation about Him, then he is a Brāhman. Naturally, it is quite possible for one to be changed from one caste into another.—*Swami Vivekananda.*

ORIGIN AND IMPORT OF CASTE

By Swami Bodhananda

(Concluded from the January Number.)

AS the basic principle of Hindu caste is culture, in India a poor man of a higher caste has a loftier social position than a king in other countries. He is honored and worshipped, though he live in a hut and begs his bread from door to door. He is proud of his blood and learning. In the western countries caste means wealth. The wealthier the man, the higher is his honor and social position. In India, the greatest princes feel proud to trace their descent to some ancient Rishi sage, dressed in simple clothes, living in a forest, eating roots and fruits, studying the Vedas, and practicing yoga; while in the West the cardinals, bishops and popes struggle hard to prove the nobility of their ancestors by tracing their descent to a robber baron or pirate king. Which caste is the better and more honorable? Caste by culture or by wealth?

It is this composite nature of the stratified social life that made the unrestrained mixture of blood between the various castes unwholesome and undesirable, and led to the laying down of restrictions on inter-marriages in the interest of the good of the community in general. Whether it is right or wrong to impose such restrictions is a point about which modern investigations, bearing on the power of heredity, leave no doubt. These investigations establish the potency of heredity in determining even the minor details in the character of individuals. It has been ascertained by the western evolutionist that both saintliness and criminality run in the blood which men inherit from their parents and ancestors. If that be

so, surely we ought to take particular care to see that there is no such admixture of blood in communities as is not on the whole conducive to the growth of purity. Otherwise the already harvested fruit of moral and self-discipline will slowly but surely decay, and there will be no compensating advantage of any kind in lieu of this loss of the not easily attained purity and strength and goodness. If such truly is the value of heredity in determining the character of individuals, and if we further know that the practical preservation of this helpful power of heredity consists more in seeing that the women of a society are not easily polluted than in looking after the discipline of the men thereof, then we can at once see what an important influence women exercise in preserving and passing on that endowment of purity, strength and goodness which any society may have acquired in the course of its growth in power, strength and civilization.

If there is any truth in the widely accepted theory of hereditary transmission, this is one of the most potent arguments in favor of hereditary caste and non-intermarriage among highly differing races and classes.

Whether the free admixture of blood among individuals belonging to different communities, living at different levels of civilizations, with different ideals, aims and aspirations, is productive of any good in the cause of any human progress, has been recently discussed by Dr. Bryce in his Romes lecture, and the conclusion to which he comes cannot but be interesting to us. He is of the opinion that such an admixture in the long run tends to diminish the wealth of character and potency for civilization which human communities possess. Although the weaker community may gain a little in quality and in

vigor by the admixture with a comparatively stronger one, the stronger community loses a great deal more by its correlated admixture with the weaker one. The loss of the stronger community being more on the whole than the gain of the weaker, such admixture is clearly not desirable in the interest of the progress of humanity as a whole. Herbert Spencer is also known to have been of the opinion that even such races, as in spite of their differences occupy similar levels of culture and civilization, will suffer loss of power through an unregulated intercrossing owing to its tendency to disturb the stability of the physiological equilibrium of all the inherited racial and individual moral endowments.

Nor do the Hindus advocate choice marriages. The elderly members of families and societies suggest whom to marry and whom not. As it is a well known fact that the progress and retrogression of the society depends largely, if not wholly, upon the nature of the offspring of the marriage, the society has a right to advise whom we should marry. It may be safely asserted that three-fourths of the criminality, corruption and domestic unhappiness of the countries where choice marriage prevails is due to injudicious and indiscriminate selection.

If today in the world any universally prevailing authority promulgates a law doing away with all social and racial barriers in matters of marriage, and declares that the men of all races and nationalities at any level of culture and civilization are perfectly at liberty to marry the women of all races and communities at any level of civilization and culture, then in the course of a few generations the whole human civilization will perish from the face of the earth.

So far we have seen that the Hindu system of caste in its plans and purposes is not injurious at all, as many people seem to imagine. There is caste among them also, inasmuch as the origin of caste is the native born qualities and capabilities of men, only in the case of these men their caste is cruder and coarser than that of the Hindus, who were cultured and saw the light of civilization centuries before Moses and Jesus. Caste is not an evil, but our failure to understand its beneficial purpose and act in accordance with its wisely laid out rules and ideals is an unmitigated sin.

As the different members of the body have their different functions to perform in the whole physical organism, even so the different castes constitute the different parts or members of the whole social organism of which "the Brahman is the head; the Kshatriya, the arms; the Vaishya, the loins; and the Sudra, the feet."

UNPUBLISHED NOTES OF CLASS TALKS.

By Swami Vivekananda (Madras, 1892-3)

IT is true that caste system becomes essential in the ordinary course of nature. Those that have aptitudes for a particular work form a class, but who is to settle the class of a particular individual? If a Brahman thinks that he has a special aptitude for spiritual culture, why should he be afraid to meet a Sudra in an open field. Will a horse be afraid of running a race with a jade?

Refer to the life of the author of Krishnakarnamrita, Villwamangal—a devotee who plucked his eyes out because he could not see God. His life illustrates the

principle that even misdirected love leads in the end to love proper.

Too early religious advancement of the Hindus and that superfiness in everything which made them cling to higher alternatives have reduced them to what they are. The Hindus have to learn a little bit of materialism from the West and teach them a little bit of spirituality.

Educate your women first and leave them to themselves; then they will tell you what reforms are necessary for them. In matters concerning them, who are you?

Who reduced the *Bhangis* and the *Pariahs* to their present degraded condition? Heartlessness in our behaviour and at the same time preaching wonderful *Advaitism*—is it not adding insult to injury?

Form and formless are intertwined in this world. The formless can only be expressed in form, and form can only be thought with the formless. This world is a form of our thoughts. The idol is the expression of religion.

In God all natures are possible. But we can see Him only through human nature. We can love him as we love a man, as father, son. The strongest love in the world is that between man and woman and that also when it is clandestine. This is typified in the love between Krishna and Radha.

Nowhere is it said in the Vedas that man is born a sinner. To say so is a damned libel on human nature.

It is not an easy task to reach the state of seeing the Reality face to face. The other day one could not find the hidden cat in a whole picture though it occupied the major portion of the picture.—*Prabuddha Bharata*.

SAYINGS OF SRĪ RĀMAKṚISHŪA

¶ Be diluted in the Supreme Spirit.

¶ Meditate on God either in an unknown corner, or in the solitude of forests, or within your own mind.

¶ Should we pray aloud to God? *A.* Pray unto Him in any way you like. He is sure to hear you, for He can hear even the footfall of an ant.

¶ Q. Where is the Lord and how is He to be found? *A.* There is a pearl in the deep sea, but one must hazard all perils to get it. So is the Lord in this world.

¶ So long as a man calls aloud "Allah Ho! Allah Ho!" ("O God! O God!"), be sure he has not yet found his Allah (God), for he who has found Him becomes quiet and full of peace.

¶ Q. How may we find our God? *A.* The angler, anxious to hook a big and beautiful Rohitta fish, waits calmly for hours together, having thrown the bait and the hook into the water, watching patiently until the bait is caught by the fish. Similarly, the devotee who patiently goes on with his devotions is sure at last to find his God.

¶ Adopt adequate means for the end you seek to attain. You cannot get butter by crying yourself hoarse saying "There is butter in the milk." If you wish to make butter, turn the milk into its curds and churn it well, and then you will get butter. So if you seek to see God, practice spiritual Sādhana (devotional exercises) and then you will see God. What is the good of merely crying "O God, O God!"?

¶ As the cloud covers the sun, so Mâyâ conceals the Deity. When the cloud moves away, the sun is seen; so when Mâyâ is removed, God becomes visible.

¶ As fishes playing in a pond covered with reeds and scum cannot be seen from outside, so God plays in the heart of a man invisibly, being screened by Mâyâ from human view.

¶ God cannot be seen so long as there is the slightest taint of desire; therefore have thy small desires satisfied, and renounce the big desires by right reasoning and discrimination.

¶ None can enter the kingdom of Heaven if there be the least trace of desire in him, just as a thread can never enter the eye of a needle if there be any slight detached fibre at its end.

¶ If a single dive into the sea does not bring to you the pearl, do not conclude that the sea is without pearls. Dive again and again and you are sure to be rewarded in the end. So if your first attempt to see God proves fruitless, do not lose heart. Persevere in the attempt and you are sure to obtain Divine grace at last.

¶ Q. If God is omnipresent, why do we not see Him?
A. Standing by the bank of a pool thickly overspread with scum and weeds, you will say that there is no water in it. If you desire to see the water, remove the scum from the surface of the pond. With eyes covered with the film of Mâyâ you complain that you cannot see God. If you wish to see Him, remove the film of Mâyâ from off your eyes.

BIRTHDAY MEMORIAL

IN commemoration of the birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda as well as of Swami Trigunatita, on Sunday, January 30, 1916, Swami Prakashananda, during the evening service, said in part:

"Before taking up the evening topic, let me mention a few points. To-day is a great day, especially so because it is the anniversary of two Swamis,—Swami Vivekananda, who was the great founder of the Vedanta movement, and Swami Trigunatita, who was the founder of this Temple and the organizer of the Vedanta Society on the Pacific Coast. These are the Swamis who were brought forth into existence by the divine touch of Sri Ramakrishna, the great Master. Sri Ramakrishna lived the life, and Swami Vivekananda was the first to carry the torch of light and wisdom to the western countries. Swami Vivekananda is well known to many of you through his writings. Those of you who have read his life just published, but not yet completed (three volumes are already out), will see through these books the different periods of his life under the guidance of Sri Ramakrishna, how he gradually grew into illumination and how, after the realization of truth came, he carried the message of Vedanta, the broad and universal teachings of Vedanta, to different countries. He knocked hard at the great centers of civilization and everywhere was successful in infusing the wonderful truth of Vedanta. You will notice how slowly but surely universal ideas are spreading and harmonizing influences are gathering strength day after day.

Then, after Swami Vivekananda, other Swamis came

to this country. Some went to the eastern cities; others came to the western cities, especially San Francisco and Los Angeles. After Swami Vivekananda, Swami Turiyananda came, and after Swami Turiyananda, Swami Trigunatita. It was he who first thought of bringing this Temple into existence. Many may ask why should we pay our respects to the memory of these great teachers. They did not seek any praise. They were always unselfish. They had no ulterior motive in their lives. But by celebrating the memory of these great teachers, we are uplifted, we are elevated, because we are reminded of the great ideals and the principles represented in their lives.

No one is more fitted than Mr. Petersen, the president of our Society, to speak a few words about Swami Trigunatita, because he has been with the Swami Trigunatita and helped him in his various activities from the time of his coming into this country until the return to his Master. So I will ask Mr. Petersen to speak a few words about Swami Trigunatita."

Mr. Petersen said: "Friends, today we commemorate a man with the strongest of characters, a man who did not know the meaning of the word "fail"—there was no such word in his dictionary—a man who was truthful to a degree, a man who was not afraid of anything or anybody, whose every act, however it may have appeared to our eyes, was done with a great purpose,—to teach his students. We who lived with him and knew him best knew his purpose. A man who had the courage of his own convictions and carried them through in spite of any opposition that could be offered. That was Swami Trigunatita. Anyone who was under Swami knew he had a kindly heart, an exceedingly kindly heart, but he

treated us all differently, according to our state of development. The one he could treat harshly, and the other he could not. And those students who could not stand his harsh treatment, even they must admit that that great man left an impression upon them which will stay with them through the balance of their lives and possibly in their future lives. He knew our true characters better than we knew them ourselves. Is it any wonder that a man with such terrific force as he possessed should make enemies? And why? Because we do not like to be told the truth. All people with positive characters make enemies, because they have the courage to tell the truth and we cannot stand it. One of our members received lessons from Swami which are inspired and will show the true character of the man when they are published. It was his desire that they should be published, and they will be in a short while when the manuscript is ready; and when you read that, you surely will know what a terrific force that man was amongst us and amongst all who came in contact with him. He had energy enough for fifty men and then enough left over for himself. He would work until twelve, one and two o'clock in the morning, and was up again at four, morning after morning, with that poor sick body of his. Never faltered for an instant. Through all his sickness, he never remained in bed. That strong will, that energy that could not be broken by anything! That was Swami Trigunatita. I personally consider it a great privilege that I was allowed to live in the same house with him for twelve years. I am a different man now. That is the truth. And the same can be said of hundreds of other people who came in contact with that terrific force, that strong character.

We will never forget that force. That force will remain with us until we pass on like he did. Born the 30th of January, 1865; passed the 10th of January, 1915."

On Sunday evening, January 30th, the members of the Vedanta Society of Los Angeles as well as many of the devoted admirers of Swamiji Vivekananda gathered at the headquarters of the Society to honor the blessed memory of this great soul. Besides Swami Abhedananda, the founder of the Los Angeles center, there were five other speakers who spoke of the memorable incidents in connection with the period of their acquaintance with the Swamiji—events which have left an indelible imprint upon their minds.

One of the speakers repeated what Swamiji said at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago, in 1893, after he was introduced by Dr. Barrows. He also described, as an eye-witness, the deep impression which was made by every word that fell from the lips of this great teacher.

He was followed by Swami Abhedananda, who spoke of the struggles of Swamiji for realization while they were living together at the feet of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. He told of his travels in India and how they lived together in the monastery near Calcutta, in London and New York.

Following this was a meditation upon the virtues of Swamiji and his life of renunciation. His picture was decorated with an abundance of fresh leaves and flowers, and upon the altar was placed the love offerings of fruits from sincere devotees. Fruits and flowers were distributed to all who were present after the close of the meditation with an appropriate prayer for the occasion. Finally, the Vedic benediction in Sanskrit was given.

The collection which was taken up was sent to Swami Premananda of the Ramakrishna Mission in India.

THE PRIMAL CAUSE *

SOME learned men, deluded, speak of Nature, others of time (as primal cause), whereas it is the greatness of the Self-effulgent One in the world whereby this wheel of creation is made to turn.

By whom this all is evermore embraced, who is the knower and the time-maker, possessed of all wisdom, by Him indeed ruled over, evolves all activity of creation.

He is beyond the world-tree, time and forms; through whom this phenomenal world revolves, knowing Him as the maker of Dharma (the law which holds the universe), the destroyer of ignorance, the lord of masterhood, the undying home of all, enthroned within the Self, one attains to immortality.

Him may we know as the supreme over-lord of lords, the Supreme God of gods, the preserver of preservers, supreme of the supreme, Lord of the universe, the God to be adored.

He is beyond all activities as well as the instruments of action; none like to Him is seen, none surely greater. In divers ways His supreme power is manifested; His intelligence and might reflect through Nature.

Of Him there is no sustainer in the world, nor any lord; no representative of Him is to be found at all. He is the cause, the over-ruler, presiding over all causes; of Him there is no generator nor any sovereign master.

He is the only God, hidden in every being, pervading all, the inner Self of every creature, presiding over all actions, the Witness, the pure intelligence, transcending all gunas.

* Adapted from Shwetāshwataropaniṣad

The one great Intelligence giving life and consciousness to all, who makes the primal seed manifold—the wise who realize Him as enthroned within the Self, theirs and not others' is the bliss which is everlasting.

Eternal of eternals, the Consciousness which every being's consciousness contains, who, one, dispenses the desires of many—knowing that Cause, the God to be known by Supreme Science, one becomes free from all bonds.

Do Thou light in my heart a burning faith, that like the pole-star is ever a sure and infallible guide. O Thou Friend of the weak, do Thou fulfil this my only desire. Thus lost in the Infinite Bliss of Thy love, I shall forget myself entirely, having Thee as mine own all day and night.—*Bengalee Hymn*.

CURRENT NEWS

It is gratifying to note the growth of the Ramakrishna Society of Rangoon, Burmah, which has just passed through the fourth year of its existence. Its library registers 242 books. The meetings of the Society are frequent and lectures are given to its members. It is quite a non-sectarian Society, to which people of different religious faiths are cordially welcome. It takes up philanthropic work also, when called upon to do so,—such as the education of girls and of the depressed classes.

Those who are interested in the spread of Vedanta thought will be glad to learn that last year a (weekly) Vedanta study class was formed at Christchurch, New Zealand, by Miss B. E. Baughan under the guidance of Swami Prakashananda. Seven of the students who at-

tended the classes have grown very much interested in the uplifting, broad and universal teachings of Vedanta, and intend to continue the classes this year. Many were greatly benefitted by the study of Karma-Yoga and other works by Swami Vivekananda.

For the month of February Swami Prakashananda has selected the following topics for his Sunday morning and evening services at the Hindu Temple, corner Webster and Filbert streets, San Francisco, Cal.:

Feb. 6, 11 A. M.: How to Conquer Our Sensitive Nature.

7:45 P. M.: Through Silence to Unfoldment.

Feb. 13, 11 A. M.: Synthesis of Indian Thought.

7:45 P. M.: Man—the Maker of His Own Destiny.

Feb. 20, 11 A. M.: Can We Harmonize Worldliness with Spiritual Life?

7:45 P. M.: Is Revelation Possible?

Feb. 27, 11 A. M.: As Thou Thinkest, Thou Shalt Become.

7:45 P. M.: Aids to the Attainment of God-consciousness.

The Fourteenth Annual Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service at Benares, India, is just received. This institution is making remarkable progress in its philanthropic work. In this ancient city of philosophical learning, thousands of poor people, suffering from disease and poverty, are being helped. The number of persons relieved in the year under review (1914), namely 12,732, represents an increase of 15 per cent. as compared with the preceding year. Of this number 761 obtained indoor hospital relief. It is interesting to know that this institution extends its help to all classes of people, irrespective of creed, caste and color. All donations and contributions should be sent to the Asst. Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares city, India.

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According to the regulations of the United States Postal Department the subscribers to the magazines, entered as second class mail-matter, are earnestly requested to renew their subscription as soon as possible after its expiration. Those who have not yet paid for the last year's subscription will kindly remit at their earliest convenience.

Manager VOICE OF FREEDOM.

THE GOSPEL OF ŚRĪ RĀMAKRISHNA

(The Great Master of Swāmi Vivekananda)

By Prof. M. N. GUPTA

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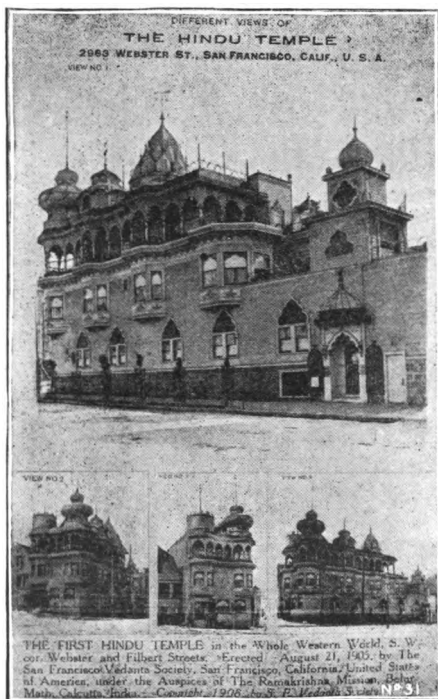
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VOICE OF FREEDOM

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THE GREAT PROPHET OF THE 19TH CENTURY—LIFE OF ŚRĪ RĀMAKRISHŪA

By the late Swami Trigunatita

(Continued from the February Number)



THOSE very things that are in born sages, that are in all the prophets, incarnations of God, are within every man, more or less. We can, if we try, if we wish, have them developed to the same extent. That boy used to meditate, to lose himself physically and mentally in God. "Oh God, if Thou existest, show Thyself, prove Thyself, appear before me," was His prayer, and he used to analyse and listen. He would lose all his physical and mental faculties, and keep simply the spiritual faculty, the power of discrimination, the power of discovering the light inside. He used to search with that search-light that he had kindled with his great love of truth that was within him from his birth. At last, after performance of hard asceticisms for twelve years, he attained the truth. He found that there was no difference between this and that, as we often say. Before, he had heard all those doctrines, all those tenets, but he could not believe in them, because whenever he prayed he found that his heart did not correspond with his words. He was sincere to the backbone. We fool ourselves at every step, at every moment of our lives.

He came out victorious after his great fight. We cannot describe properly what he went through in those twelve years of hard asceticism. We cannot realize, because we are not yogins, we are not practitioners of those hard yogas. Those people who lived around him, and used to see him, told us the story. They used to see the boy sitting from morning to night in one seat, in one posture. He felt no hunger, no thirst, no heat, no cold, no fear, nothing except inside the burning desire for the truth. That was the way he lived. That love for the truth became his sustenance. If you ever were in love with anybody you would know whether it is possible for a person to forget for awhile the ideas of hunger and thirst, the ideas of fear. You can do anything for the sake of love. A little love for a little thing of this world can make us forget all the disturbances and troubles and miseries of life, to run after the lover at the sacrifice of everything. But when that great love for the Infinite God is kindled in us, imagine how very forgetful we will be of all these worldly affairs! Now-a-days, when we go to search after truth or after God, we try to immortalize this world. We think that this world will live forever, that we shall live forever. Ignorance! That is the delusion, wonderful delusion. You cannot deny the existence of this world, the existence of your bodies, the existence of so many things of life. You cannot help recognizing all these, and you forget the truth. And if, by some good karma, by some good work in your previous life, or even in this life, you get that desire after the truth, or of God, or of immortal life, who will show you the way? You do not believe in Jesus, you do not believe in any Savior, you do not believe in any incarna-

tion of God, you do not believe in any Scripture, you do not believe in any doctrines, in any paths of religion. You do not want to. It would degrade your position. You want to immortalize this world and your body.

If you search for God from outside, He is far, far away from you. Search inside. Inside means that you will forget the outside; your mind will not wander in your meditation, you will forget the external world. The external world is our life now. When we sit quiet the external world appears within us. It is not the fault of the poor thing that we have within us—the mind. It is our own fault. We have trained our minds in that way. We have put so many impressions of so many objects of the world into our minds. We have tinted the mind the colors of the objects of the world. When you try to deal with the mind, to catch and control it, when you meet the mind face to face, it appears in its full vigor. The mind is not to blame. The mind has already been trained by you in such a way. Those things the poor mind reveals to you when you seek, shows you the way you have taught it. If we ask you to control your mind, to train your mind with some regularity, method, etc., you say, "Oh, organization, oh rules and regulations, oh method, bondage. We are free, we do not want any bondage. Controlling the mind! No necessity! Why? The voice tells us the right thing from within." The mind becomes the voice. We are misled and we become as worldly as ever and cannot raise ourselves higher. We blame the teacher, or the religion, or the church, or the Scriptures, or God.

That boy understood all these things and he was very careful not to be led away by worldly temptations. From

morning till night he used to sit in one posture in deep meditation, searching after the truth. The burning thirst after the truth was the only sustenance of life that he had within him. Others used to come and call him by name, "Get up, get out, eat, drink, or you will die. We will drive you away from this garden, for we cannot see you dying here, committing suicide here." It was as though they were addressing a tree, or the river, for the boy could not hear. Then they used to thrash him, to bring him to consciousness so that he might eat. They understood that the boy was an extraordinary one, that they should take proper care of him; but they did not know how. They thought that if he did not eat a little fruit, or drink a little milk, every day or at least every other day, how could he continue his practice? So they used to beat him, to make him open his mouth for some milk. In that way twelve years passed.

You might have read in the *Light of Asia* of the great Buddha, and how many years he passed in hard asceticism without even a drop of milk and yet it was possible for him to live. That is possible for such people who are messengers, who are Messiahs, who are the great prophets and sages that come to teach the world. Jesus taught one thing. It remained for a few years and dwindled away. Now we read the Bible and we cannot understand the meaning, we throw it away. Why do we discard the Bible? We have not *that* intelligence, *that* understanding power, to grasp its meaning or the meaning of the words of Jesus. *Again the same Jesus comes back for your sake to teach the same Bible.*

You compare all the Bibles of the world. One and all will say the same thing. But who can explain until

a Jesus, a Christ comes? Ramakrishna came to teach the Bible, to teach not one Bible, but all the Bibles of the world. Not to teach as we teach, from the platform, from the pulpit, either in church or in school, but in His own practical life. The great Teachers impart that force, that spiritual life, that spiritual treasure that they earned for humanity out of their own trouble and experience. We know when we work how tired we get, our brows perspire, but their blood dries out of hard asceticism. And that young boy, when he practiced those hard asceticisms, attained the object for which he was meant, for which he came to this world.

Such sages, or those who attain the truth, do not care to live afterwards in this world. Not that they have any independent will or judgment about their staying or going away, but it is the Law that makes them go. You can imagine that after twelve years hard asceticisms few people can live in flesh and blood,—in the physical life. Spiritually, when in the deepest meditation they enter into *nirvākālpa samadhi*, meaning into the highest trance, where there is nothing but supreme bliss, the oneness of the spirit, they lose their individual existence; the ego and the body are left behind; the spirit is united with the One. How can such awake from meditation? But this young boy came back from his deep meditation and *samadhi*, owing to the force, to the necessity of the message he received. He came to give that message to the world.

As you have just heard, that young idolator was born quietly. Nobody could understand His greatness in His boyhood. Nobody, in His childhood, could understand His grandeur. When as a young man, after His success

in spiritual culture He came out of His meditation, very few people understood Him; and He went away quietly, leaving what, bequeathing what? Such a great energy, such a great force, such a great power, that *must* produce something very great. He used to tell us to follow what He said and did and we would see whether His words and actions corresponded. Those who have learned His life have understood a little glimpse of the truth. After His spiritual success, externally He practiced in every religion. He became a Christian, worshipped Jesus the Christ, understood what Christ was, what His words and the Bible were. He used to explain passages of the Bible which He never had read in His life. He never could read any sentence or utter a single word in English. He became a Mohammedan; He understood who Mohammed was and that he had taught the truth.

All the prophets, sages, and incarnations of God are nothing else but messengers to bring the message from Heaven. We cannot see God. We cannot grasp the ideas of God, we cannot understand what Heaven is unless we hear from there. And who can bring such messages? Nobody can drop down from Heaven. God sends His messengers. They come, they are born and grow up just in the natural way, and they practice the same practices and go by the same way that we are expected to go. They show practically that every path is true. The words of Jesus, the words of the Bible were misunderstood, and are still being misunderstood. He could explain beautifully that there is or can be not one messenger only, not one path only, not one incarnation of God, but many, so that the different types of mind be satisfied. He found out the difficult position of mind in

this world. We cannot give up the world and go to God. We have been created in the materials of the world. Inside and outside there is nothing but the world. Outside it is worldly, inside it is worldly. How from such conditions can we raise our level, can we improve our state? He showed the way. In the Bible Jesus told you, "Be ye in the world but not of it." And this poor heathen came and showed to you what the Christians say but cannot understand,—how to be in this world but not of it. He said first you keep before the mind the highest ideal, that you are one with the Absolute. "Thou art One: philosophers represent Thee variously." Keep that ideal before you and start from where you are. No need of renouncing the world. Ramakrishna did not go to the forest to practice his great asceticism after the truth. He stayed there; he had even married.

If you want to see God in one life, sages, prophets, messengers, have shown the way in their practical life, and you will have to do as they have done. Or, if you have not that great energy, great power, great capacity, you may go slowly. But go surely. Know that you are going. Do not go back. Do not stop. Go, even if it be slowly, but advance all the time and there will come a time when you will see the light, when you will see the truth, be it in twelve years, be it in twelve lives, be it in twelve centuries. Time is eternal before us. God is Infinite and eternal. But start your work right now, so that you may be on the right road and may not lose time and energy.

Hook the fish of desire by abstinence.—*Nirvana-prakaram.*

THE VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

By Swami Abhedananda

"Vedanta is the most sublime of all philosophies and the most comforting of all religions."—Prof. Max Muller.

SINCE the Parliament of Religions at the World's Fair in Chicago, 1893, the educated men and women of this country have taken considerable interest in the study of the philosophy and religion of India. The old prejudice that the Hindus are idolatrous heathen and the erroneous idea that they have neither philosophy nor religion are slowly vanishing from the minds of orthodox Christians. On the contrary, many of the Oriental scholars, like Professor Max Muller, Paul Duessen of Kiel University, as well as the students of the advanced thought in the United States, have already realized that from ancient times India has produced a nation of philosophers and that there are to be found almost all the higher and lower phases of philosophic and religious thoughts that have existed either in the ancient or modern world.

Well has it been said by Victor Cousin, the great French philosopher, whose knowledge of the history of European philosophy was unrivalled, that "India contains the whole history of philosophy in a nutshell." Again he says: "When we read the poetical and philosophical monuments of the East—above all those of India, which are beginning to spread in Europe—we discover there many a truth, and truth so profound and which makes such a contrast with the meanness of the results at which the European genius has sometimes stopped, that we are constrained to bend the knee before

the philosophy of the East, and to see in this cradle of the human race the native land of the highest philosophy."

Indeed, the students of the various systems of philosophy of ancient and modern India find in them the rational solutions of vital problems concerning the original and source of the Universe, the Cause of all phenomena, the real nature of the Soul and its destiny, and its relation to the Eternal Being; they also realize that in these solutions the ancient seers of Truth anticipated the final conclusions of Plato, a Spinoza, a Berkeley, a Hume, a Kant, a Hegel, a Schoepenhauer, a Herbert Spencer, a Darwin or a Haeckel, even centuries before their existence.

In fact, the natural tendency of the Hindu mind from the very beginning has been to search after the unchangeable Reality of the Universe, to trace the Cause of the world of phenomena, to solve the problem of life and death, to understand the purpose of our earthly existence, and above all to know the true relation of man to God as well as to all the organic and inorganic objects of the world.

Animated by intense desire for Truth and guided by their unswerving love for Truth, the Hindu thinkers discovered many laws of nature and described them in scientific terms without fearing any persecution from any source. They understood the process of Cosmic evolution and its purpose so clearly that even Professor Huxley could not help admitting it when he wrote: "To say nothing of the Hindu sages, to whom evolution was a familiar notion long before Paul of Tarsus was born." Referring to this point Sir Monier-Williams says:

"Indeed, if I may be allowed the anachronism, the

Hindus were Spinozites more than two thousand years before the existence of Spinoza, and Darwinians many centuries before Darwin; and evolutionists many centuries before the doctrine of evolution had been accepted by the scientists of our time, and before any word like 'evolution' existed in any language of the world." His statement is absolutely true, as we find the process of Cosmic evolution was described in the Rig Veda, the most ancient Scripture of the world; and upon this doctrine of evolution the whole philosophy and religion of Vedanta are based.

Although Vedanta Philosophy is one of the oldest systems of philosophies of India, still it harmonizes with the ultimate conclusions of modern science in explaining the stages of cosmic evolution from one primordial substance into the existing variety of the universe. This process, says Vedanta, must have taken millions and millions of years to give our planet such suitable conditions for human life as we see today around us.

Space will not permit me to go into the details of the teachings of the Vedanta, which means the "Highest Wisdom," but in short I may explain that the fundamental principle of this spiritual philosophy is oneness of God and the Supreme Being. It teaches that there is one Reality, one Life, one Spirit, one Intelligence, and one Mind in the universe, of which the individuals are nothing but so many manifestations in time and space. This one Reality is the same as The Good of Plato, the Substantia of Spinoza, the *Ding an sich* of Kant, the Unknown and Unknowable of Herbert Spencer, and the Oversoul of Ralph Waldo Emerson. It is named "Brahman" in Vedanta. The same Reality which is One

without a second is called Jehovah by the Jews; the Father in Heaven by the Christians; Allah by the Mahometans, and Buddha by the Buddhists. The names may vary but the substance is the same. To understand this Unity of Being under a diversity of names and forms has always been the highest ideal of all philosophies and religions of the world. But history of different nations shows that no other philosophy has succeeded in demonstrating this Oneness so clearly as it has been done in Vedanta. It also explains through this spiritual Oneness the true basis of higher ethics. Christ said, "Love thy neighbor as thyself," but He did not give the reason why we should love our neighbor as our self. The answer was given in Vedanta—because in spirit we are already one with our neighbor.

Wherever the higher ethics of Vedanta is taught and practiced there cannot prevail war, quarrel, fight and in-harmony, but on the contrary there reigns the kingdom of Heaven spreading the benign rays of harmony, Divine love, brotherhood and everlasting Peace.—*Reason.*

We preach neither social equality nor inequality, but that every being has the same rights, and insist upon freedom of thought and action in every way. We reject none, neither theist, nor pantheist, monist, polytheist, agnostic nor atheist; the only condition of being a disciple is modelling a character at once the broadest and the most intense. Nor do we insist upon particular codes of morality as to conduct, or character, or eating and drinking, except so far as it injures others. Whatever retards the onward progress or helps the downward fall is *vice*; whatever helps in coming up and becoming harmonized is *virtue*.—*Swami Vivekananda.*

SAYINGS OF ŚRĪ RĀMAKṚISHŪA

¶ So long as the mind is unsteady and fickle it availeth nothing, even though a man has got a good Guru and the company of holy men.

¶ A perfect man is like a lotus leaf in the water or like a mud-fish in the marsh. Neither of these is polluted by the element in which it lives.

¶ As an aquatic bird, such as a pelican, dives into water, but the water does not wet its plumage, so the emancipated soul lives in the world, but the world does not affect him.

¶ After the attainment of Samādhi some have the ego—the ego of the servant, the ego of the devotee. Sankarāchārya kept the ego of Vidya (knowledge) for the teaching of others.

¶ When a fire burns the moths come, one knows not whence, and they fall into it and die. The fire is not seen to invite the moth to its fate. Similar to this is the preaching of the perfect ones. They do not go about calling others, but hundreds come to them of their own accord, no one knows whence, to get instruction from them.

¶ What is true preaching like? Instead of preaching to others, if one worships God all that time, that is enough preaching. He who strives to make himself free is the real preacher. Hundreds come from all sides, no one knows whence, to him who is free, and are taught by him. When a rosebud blooms, the bees come from all sides uninvited and unasked.

GÎTÂ CLASS LESSONS

By the late Swami Trigunatita

CHAPTER third; verses sixteen, seventeen, eighteen:
"He who on earth does not follow the wheel thus revolving, sinful of life and rejoicing in the senses, he, O son of Prithâ, liveth in vain.

"But the man who rejoiceth in the Self, with the Self is satisfied, and is content in the Self, for him verily there is nothing to do.

"For him there is no interest in things done in this world, nor any in things not done, nor doth any object of his depend on any being."

The wheel has been started this way. Whoever will not obey the motion imparted by the wheel will be impure and sinful, always addicted to vice and sensual engagements, and will live in vain in this world. This wheel is described in the previous verses.

The whole world is related. Every object is related to every other object, equally so in higher as in lower planes. All must perform their duties to others; the higher towards the lower and the lower towards the higher; all are connected by a tie. All epidemic troubles and visitations, etc., come because we lack in the performance of our duties to one another. There would be no famine, no want of rain nor too much rain, no storm, no unnatural nor untimely death if human beings performed their daily duties, daily service towards the higher powers, agencies and deities. Whoever will not follow this predestined law, preordained, the wheel that has already been started to turn, the law already in force, must suffer; his life will be full of suffering. Because of his doing wrong, others will have to suffer, for we are

all related one to another. Why are we drawn so much to the sensual objects of the world? We are happy when engaged in sensual acts, such as eating and drinking or going to entertainments. Our whole mind and attention are drawn toward the senses, for the satisfaction of the senses; not for the satisfaction of the inner soul, but the external soul. Why are we so drawn toward sensual objects? Because we have not performed our daily duty, our daily service; because we disobey the law set forth by God, by the Eternal Intelligence. Consequently, we live in vain, our object will never be accomplished. We shall not be able to know what the object of our life is; we do not know why we have been eating and drinking this and that; why this and that will happen we do not know. All is in vain, if we are unaware of the object of life, of our coming into this world, and the object of our karmas. We come and go in vain; our stay in this world is all in vain, just an animal life; everything is in vain and we make the lives of others sinful and vain too. If we follow this law of the wheel, we will have consideration for others. The continued running of life, the long chain of karma, one karma producing another, is the meaning of the wheel. If we perform our karma properly, knowingly, then we break the chain and become free.

Verse 16 pertains to a life of trouble and misery, all in vain. Verse 17 is just the opposite. Entertainments are good if we understand the purpose behind or within. If we are strict in our self-culture, our whole attention diverted toward self-culture, toward knowing the Self, then in whatever we do, even in sleep, let us know what the condition of the mind is, what the condition of the

consciousness is. We desire to know the truth, we long for happiness and bliss. How shall we get that bliss, if we do not occupy our mind steadily in all of our actions, all our engagements, either in the wakeful state or in sleep?

"Remaining conscious of the Self steadily, continually, he who does not go away from the Self, no matter where his senses, mind or body go, no matter what happens, what environment he is in, he will not forget the Self."

This is easy to say; it is easy to listen, but it is very difficult to remember to continue the practice. But if we try, we shall succeed. A little to-day, more to-morrow; by and by there will be nothing but success. That man who is happy in the Self does not go out to the external world to find a little happiness, a little rest, a little pleasure, a little change. Where shall man go for rest? To the external world, to material objects?

We continue to think of that on which the mind has placed itself, and if asked where the mind was, we deny out of vanity. We say confession is contrary to self-respect. We are so fond of deception, we want to hide our faults and defects; but if we would let people know what we are, we would rise much higher. Let us begin by confessing to ourselves. How can we know ourselves, if we are not honest with ourselves? Our mind can not be fixed, but is turned away and we forget our object and self-culture. Importance of self-culture: it should be our one engagement.

Verse 19: "Therefore, without attachment, constantly perform action which is duty, for by performing action without attachment, man verily reacheth the Supreme."

Whatever he will do, that person has no more duty to perform. Body, mind and life is there, but that same

material body which was misleading him, these same senses, will continue performing their work just as before, but the result of these works was formerly given to the soul: now the soul being separated will not be responsible for the work done by the body or the senses, nor will even body or mind be responsible. Not that they might do anything wrong—they will no longer be able to do anything wrong. Body, mind and senses would inject poison into the individual soul; but now they have lost their poisonous fangs. Certain snakes are poisonous, but when the poison is extracted, the bite will not produce any evil effect. So, with the senses of the freed soul, they will not be able to produce any more evil. The result of the past and the cause of the future will be broken. Neither body nor senses will produce any result of the present work, nor will the senses, body or mind be subject to the effect of past karmas. They will all be broken. Such a one's progress cannot but be eternal, without any obstacle. His road is clear; he sees from a distance the object in view. The wheel was the motor. Now he runs independently of the wheel; nothing can stop him any more. That man is always happy; he is blessed in being contented with himself. He will never go away from the Self, will never forget himself. His pleasure can never again be in the external world.

If we have ever sought for peace and real bliss, we must know that that peace and bliss is only within and not without. As soon as we understand that peace and bliss are within us, then we shall be very happy and no kind of trouble will be able to unbalance or disturb us, or take us away from our self-culture. "No more work for him exists"—for the freed soul has already finished

all his work. His body and senses will be working, but his real Self has been separated from the material world. That released Self will not be bound by that wheel which is set on us.

We have to run and work and work incessantly and and be subject to all kinds of disturbances. We disturb our own mind; we create our own trouble. We run away from our path of culture, disobey the law and fall into more and more misery. The free soul will not be subject even to the law of duty. What great pleasure will be his! We do not know real pleasure or we would not be so affected by disturbances. We have not yet found the great pleasure of the Self. How can we find it? We have not yet started our practice. We have not had faith, do not believe in the rules of practice, so how can we know our real Self? We are so materialistic, all turned toward the external where pleasure is superficial: not lasting, but changing, fleeting. The internal pleasure is everlasting.

True prayer is nothing else than the love of God. Its excellence does not consist in the multitude of our words, for God knows our inmost feelings without the need of words. The true prayer is that of the heart, and the heart prays only through its desires. He who desires not from the depths of his heart makes a deceitful prayer. If he should pass whole days in reciting prayers, or in meditating, or in exciting himself to pious feelings, he does not truly pray, if he does not desire what he asks. We pray without ceasing when we unceasingly retain true love and true desire in our hearts.

—Fenelon.

FRAGMENTS FROM A MEDITATION CLASS

By the late Swami Trigunatita

WE are expected to know and realize that our lessons, our culture and practice, must be of very intense nature else we cannot expect results. A light practice does not do. Whatever worship we offer to God we must offer intensely. In physical culture, in the practice of worldly affairs it takes so much energy to gain a little result; so much strength and energy incessantly applied in singing or the daily piano practice. How much more is necessary for spiritual ends! To discipline the fingers requires so much—to discipline the mind so much more. A little attention, a little lesson, a little practice, will not gain the attainment of the Truth. Our life must be given to attain It. Do we realize that? And we indulge the old habit—if the mind does not like to meditate we cannot. In business affairs it is not so: we have to do things whether we like to or not. Our lesson is on Discrimination. Where do we spend our energy? If that mind does not want to meditate we must kill that mind. If we have any aspiration to attain the Truth, we must discriminate what we do—how much to do—and what not. We must realize our responsibility. Meditation gives rise to all our latent powers. But we have not really determined our purpose. We have not shown the whip to the mind; we never did. The mind will obey if we insist. We have never tried properly. We are slaves to the mind—we never ask it to do our will. Why does it dislike to meditate? Why create headaches or complain of lack of time? Deceitful is not even a fit name for us. We want to know the Self? We want to

know our own comforts for the body. We do nothing else from morning to night. What have we been doing all these years? No result, or if result we are growing in willfulness, disobedience, negligence. It is the most wonderful thing in God's creation that we do not do our proper duty. We cannot explain our misconduct—we make so many excuses. Not to be able to make our discrimination, our will power strong, is stranger than all other laws of Nature. Simply reading and studying will not be enough. It is not a university, where you just come and study. To make a determination is not hard for anyone who really wants. The body and environments will not hinder if we are sincere.—*July 16, 1914.*

IMPORTANT NOTICE

For some unavoidable reasons the VOICE OF FREEDOM will be discontinued with the March issue. But we hope to resume its publication in the near future under better auspices and on a broader scale. We take this opportunity to express our thanks to all who helped in any way in the continuance of the magazine. Those who have not yet paid their yearly subscription will favor us by remitting the same at their earliest convenience. Those who have already renewed their subscription should notify us immediately and their money will be refunded.

SWAMI PRAKASHANANDA,
Manager Voice of Freedom.

That Supreme Brahman, the Self of all, the great Abode of the universe, subtler than the subtle, the Eternal, That is thyself and Thou art That.—*Kaivalya-Upanishad.*

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

By the late Swami Trigunatita

Ques. In our search for spirituality, would you advise considering material science?

Ans. There is a limit; we should not devote all our time to material law. A little bit is necessary to go on in this world,—a little bit, not much. All our attention should be devoted to spiritual culture. That is the duty of man.

Ques. Shall we be free before we stop returning to this earth?

Ans. Yes, even in this very life—in a moment—you may understand the Truth. It requires not material science but spiritual science.

Ques. As there can be no coming back unless we go away, can we define the two relations? Where do we go?

Ans. If we have not finished our task of cause and effect here, then we take another body. We simply change from this body. We remain the same; we do not die, but our bodies die.

Ques. Do we come back into a physical body?

Ans. Yes.

Ques. Have you ever met any who would not have to come back?

Ans. Yes, one or two. I have travelled over many countries, and have only met one or two who had made sufficient progress for that.

Ques. Was Jesus Christ such a person?

Ans. Yes.

Ques. Should we then be equal to Jesus?

Ans. Yes, we can be even higher than Jesus,—we can be higher than God. God is relative, for when anything creates something it is bound by the laws of causation and becomes a relative something.

Ques. When the spirit leaves the body, where does it go?

Ans. It goes into some new body.

Ques. It goes into some new body?

Ans. Yes, into some new body. We may go into a very hideous thing, and may suffer much, if we have been very wicked. We may even go back to the animal or vegetable plane. According to the theory of evolution, it is the same life that we see in the mineral kingdom and on the human plane. The difference is in degree not in kind. The material has become man. It has taken the form of man. If you improve enough, you can be a God and even higher.

Ques. Is the soul that leaves the body conscious between the time it leaves the body and enters another?

Ans. There are several theories. Of course until we die ourselves we cannot know that; but the general notion is that we are not conscious.

CURRENT NEWS

Swami Abhedananda has returned to the Vedanta Ashrama, West Cornwall, Conn., after spending the winter in Los Angeles, where he established a new center. The Swami stopped over in San Francisco for a few days, during which time many students had an opportunity to meet him.

The Vedanta Society of Bangalore Cantonment, India, celebrated the fifty-fourth anniversary of the birth of Sri-math Swami Vivekananda Sunday, February 6, 1916, at the Chathur Veda Siddanta Sabha School. The program was as follows: 1 Feeding the Poor, 11 A. M. to 3 P. M.; 2 Music and Discourse about the life of Swamiji, 4 to 5 P. M.; 3 Rathotsawam with Sankirthanam, 6:30 P. M.

On Sunday, March 12th, Sri Ramakrishna's Birthday was celebrated at the Auditorium of the Hindu Temple

by the Vedanta Society of San Francisco with a fifteen hour service beginning at 6 A. M. and ending at 9 P. M. The Auditorium was tastefully decorated befitting the occasion. The services commenced with singing and meditation, after which Swami Prakashananda spoke on the true significance of worship and introduced the idea of God as Mother by translating and explaining the hymns from Chandi*. At 9:30 A. M. Mrs. B. E. Petersen read an interesting paper on "Divine Motherhood of God," and at 11 A. M. the Swami lectured on "Sri Ramakrishna: His Unique Life Mission." After singing by Mrs. Allan and Mrs. Petersen, Swami read and explained from the Bengali "Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna" (vols. 3 & 4) and Mr. E. C. Brown read the lecture on "The Ideal of Universal Religion" by Swami Vivekananda. At 3 P. M. the Swami gave his second lecture on "Sri Ramakrishna: The Universality of His Message," which was an exalted lesson on the real meaning of Universality. Phonographic records of divine Hindu songs and readings helped pass the time until 5 P. M. Then Mr. C. F. Petersen spoke, in a clear and concise manner, on the growth of the Vedanta movement on the Pacific Coast, and the practicability of the Vedanta Philosophy in business life. Mr. Frank Alexander, just from India, then spoke feelingly on "The Relationship of the Master and Swami Vivekananda." At 8 P. M. the Swami gave his last lecture of the day on "Sri Ramakrishna as a Great World Teacher," during which he was at his best, and a few devotional Hindu songs sung by him before the evening service were greatly appreciated. Special mention should be accorded Mrs. Edythe Allan for the rendition of several solos which she sang with much feeling and expression. Altogether the celebration passed off splendidly and will be long remembered by all who visited the Temple.

* One of the most sacred books of the Hindus containing the conception of Divine Mother in Her various phases.

BOOK REVIEW

THE ARYA SAMAJ. An Account of Its Origin, Doctrines and Activities, with a Biographical Sketch of Its Founder. By Lajpat Rai. Longmans, Green & Co., 39 Paternoster Row, London. 4th Ave. & 30th St., New York. Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras. 1915. Price, \$1.75 net.

This movement, which has been compared in importance to the Protestant Reformation, or to the Puritan Revival, although of comparatively recent origin (1875), already numbers more than a quarter of a million adherents.

Inextricably bound up with and dominating it, however, is the remarkable personality of its founder, Swami Dayananda Saraswati—it was his burning love of the Truth, his courage in the face of contumely and persecution that gave the Arya Samaj its original impetus, and that continue to inspire its members. Dayananda was a Brahmin by caste, a wandering ascetic of the sternest and most uncompromising type, learned in the Sanskrit Scriptures, but without knowledge of European languages or civilization. He preached a monotheism of an exalted type, the union of a spiritual asceticism with an elaborate ritual and strictly defined rules of conduct for every department of life, and claimed for all the right to study the Vedas, as well as the privilege of individual interpretation, providing that the etymology and philosophy conform to the ancient and approved canons of interpretation. He translated the Vedas into Hindi, making them accessible to all; for this one thing alone, he is revered by some as the savior of his country. Further, he explained the rules of Vedic interpretation and insisted that because the Vedic Sanskrit is mostly obsolete they should be studied in the light of Vedic grammar and with the help of literature which had no trace of modernism. He threw discredit on the existing commentaries on the Vedas, actually rejecting some. Those which he accepted he regarded as only of a dependent character: that is, they were to be followed only in so far as they conformed to the teachings of the Vedas themselves.

But Swami Dayananda was more than a religious propagandist; he was a social reformer and a true patriot as well. He repudiated caste by birth; whilst he could not close his eyes to the difference in

men physically, mentally, morally and spiritually, nevertheless he averred that opportunities should be given to all, men and women. He based the social ideals of the Arya Samaj upon the ideals of the ancient *Rishis* of India, namely: The Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man; the equality of man; absolute justice and fair play between man and man, nation and nation; equal opportunities for all according to their nature, karma and merit; love and charity towards all. One of the greatest services rendered by the Arya Samaj to the cause of social reform is its championship of the right of the depressed and untouchable classes of Hindus to be admitted into the organization on the same footing as the highest castes.

It follows that in Swami Dayananda's cry of "back to the Vedas," he should revert also to the ancient Hindu ideals of womanhood and the relation of the sexes. A study of the ancient Hindu literature makes it abundantly clear that the present deplorable state of the Indian women is due to a fall from the old ideals. In ancient India, woman occupied a high position in society. The girls were entitled to as much education as the boys, the only difference being that the period of education expired sooner. The minimum age for marriage of girls was sixteen; in the matter of the choice of a mate both parties enjoyed equal freedom and opportunities. Child marriage was not known. The Arya Samaj has carried on a vehement crusade against child marriage; it fixed the age of marriage as sixteen for girls and twenty-five for boys and encourages celibacy to later ages. In the educational work undertaken the girls have the same privileges as the boys.

Besides its religious and educational propaganda the Arya Samaj engages in philanthropic work on a large scale. It was the first purely Indian association to organize orphanages and widow homes, as well as to start a non-official movement for the relief of distress caused by famine. In times of pestilence it organizes medical relief, nursing the sick and helping in the disposal of the dead.

Though one may not entirely agree with those who think that the future of the Arya Samaj is practically the future of Hinduism, it must be conceded that no movement of recent years has done more to rid the Hindu mind of the tyranny of society and custom, to loosen the chains of religious prejudice and superstition and to bring about liberty of thought, liberty of conscience and liberty of action.

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Or, if you cannot, dream the truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free!

—*Swami Vivekananda.*
